

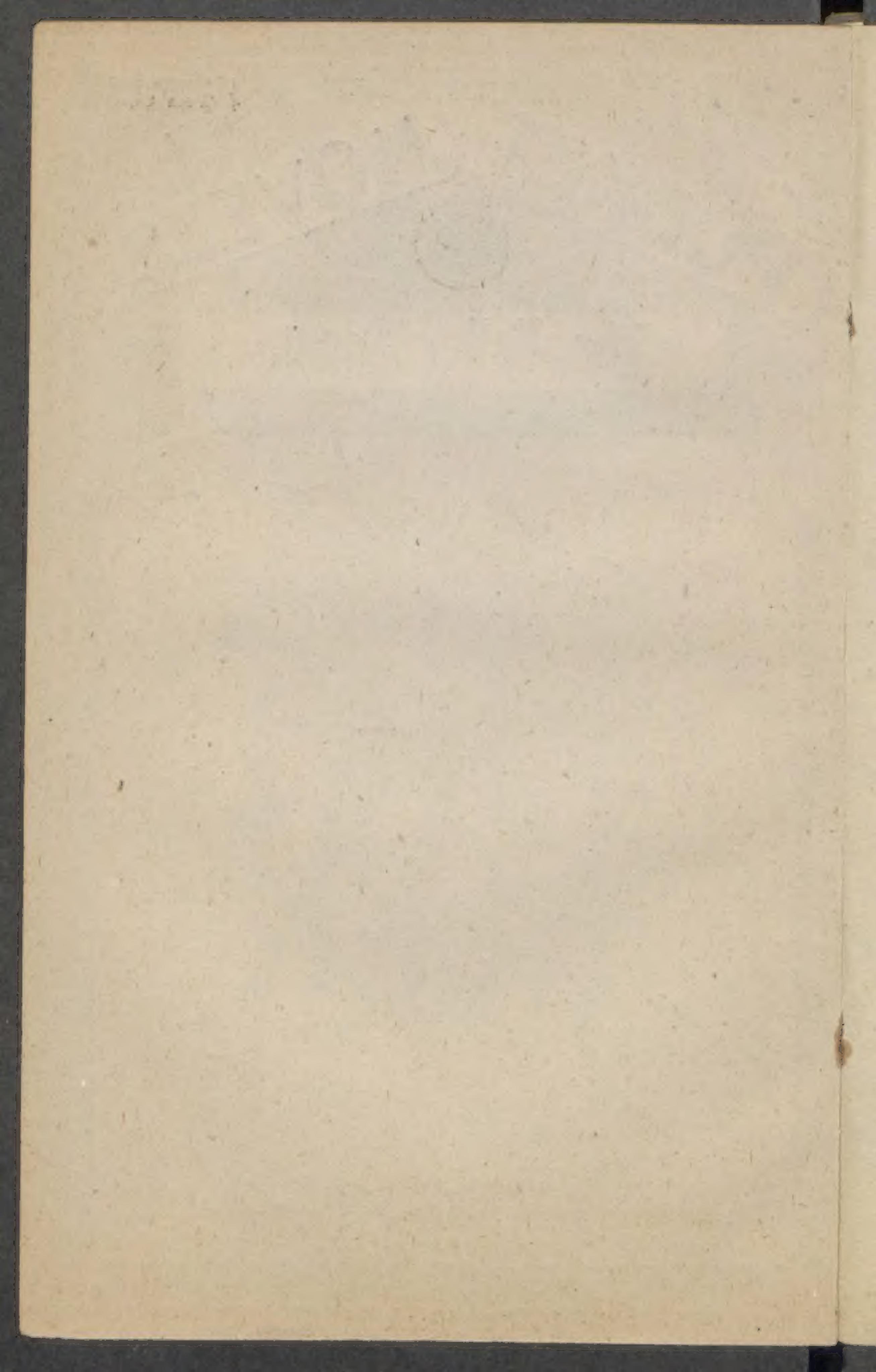
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# POCKET NOVELS

The Valley Scout. 153





THE  
VALLEY SCOUT.

A STIRRING INDIAN TALE.

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BY SEELIN ROBINS.

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# THE VALLEY SCOUT.

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## CHAPTER I.

WHAT AN OLD GENTLEMAN ENCOUNTERED IN THE WOODS.

*"Get out! get out! hangnation! let go, I tell you,  
or I'll smash you!"*

Josiah Bowles sprang several feet in air and danced frantically, while the copperhead serpent (*Trigonocephalus contortrix*), which had fastened his fangs inextricably in his boot-leg, flapped around like a whip-lash. Josiah was sixty-one and a half years old, and had done a great deal of dancing at the apple pearings and parties, but never had his legs beat the tattoo that they now did, and the way that flat-headed coppery-hued reptile hung to his ankle was extraordinary. Josiah kicked hard enough to snap the thing asunder, and when he paused from sheer exhaustion there it still clung!

The old gentleman now ventured to take a look at it, and immediately saw that it had not loosened its hold, for the very good reason that it was unable to do so. When in walking carefully through the bushes he had stepped upon a coiled up pulpy mass, the distressed snake had struck his head out with the quickness of lightning and buried his fangs in his boot-leg, so immovably that they could not be extracted.

Fully satisfied that the reptile was entrapped and could inflict no injury, Josiah had time to deliberate on the proper method of disposing of him. It did not take long to determine this. A large flat stone lay invitingly near, and the squirming "varmint" was dragged upon this, by his own fangs, when the heavy boot-heel of the opposite foot, speedily crushed out his life and shape.

"There, concarn you! I guess you won't go and stick your teeth in another man's boot!" was the exclamation of the old gentleman, as he surveyed the shapeless mass. "O jingo! I wonder if he bit me! I do believe I feel a pain!"

And startled almost out of his senses, Bowles slung his right foot under his left knee, and began tugging at his boot in his desperate endeavor to pull it off; but in his tramping this day he had stepped over considerable swampy ground, and his cowhides, as a natural consequence, were pretty thoroughly soaked—so much so indeed that his boot stuck as if it were a part of the foot itself, despite his furious efforts to move it.

Bowles shut his eyes, compressed his lips, held his breath until he grew black in the face, grunted, tugged sweated, rested and started anew, but all in vain—for the boot seemed to be held in its place more tightly than ever, and he slammed his foot down spitefully upon the ground.

"O jingo! I've been bit by that blasted varmint!" wailed Bowles; "my leg is swelling and will soon burst."

Then as visions of his strong-minded wife came into his mind, he added,

"Won't Cynthia feel bad when she hears this? It was her fault too; as soon as she found that brindle cow was missing, she must go and pack me off, helter skelter on the switch-tailed mare after her, and here I've got bit by an infernal copperhead! Look at that boot just ready to burst open?"

As he addressed these words principally to himself, he obeyed them, and stared at his foot with a woful look, that would have excited pity in the breast of a savage.

"Just ready to crack open ! There's two or three ways a feller has a chance of saving himself when he gets bit by one of them varmints. There's the pilot weed that allers grows near the snake that will cure his bite ; but I've dragged this reptile so far, I don't know where to look for that. Then I recollect when I was a boy and got bit by one of 'em, the old man dug a hole in the ground and put me in up to my chin, and kept me there till I came out all right ; but," he added as he looked around, "this is all swamp land, and I havn't got anything to dig a hole with, nor any one to dig it for me—so that 'ere can't be did. The other method," and here the old gentleman's eyes sparkled, "is to fill yourself chuck full of whiskey ! Jingo ! that's the method for me, but then I hain't got the whiskey, and before I get home I'll be a goner."

Josiah Bowles was about sinking in the lowest depths of despair, when he made a more critical examination of his boot. To his unspeakable relief he found the fangs had barely penetrated the leather without touching his skin.

"What a fool I am !" was his reflection, as he grinned over the discovery. "It's lucky I didn't get my boot off, for I would never have got it on again ; but hello ! this ain't finding the brindle cow, and Cynthia will raise a high old time if I go back without her."

The previous evening, when the three cows belonging to Josiah Bowles came home, the brindle was missing, and the wrathful old lady who so spitefully jirked the udders of the kine in her efforts to make them yield their lacteal richness, insisted that her husband should go at once in search of them ; but he pleaded his rheumatiz, and the lateness of the hour, and she consented to wait until morning.

At the earliest streak of day, therefore, Josiah swallowed a few mouthfulls of food, and mounting his switch-tailed mare, started over the mountain from Welsburg, in Cherry Valley, in quest of his lost cow. This was not the first time this troublesome quadruped had turned up missing and compelled a tedious hunt before she could be found. She seemed to have a special leaning toward a large marshy swamp, where she had been found on several occasions. Accordingly, Mr. Bowles headed his animal towards this particular section, and reaching the edge of the swamp he fastened his horse to the limb of a tree, and pursued the search on foot.

The comet-like habits of the cow had caused the owner to place a bell upon her neck, and when he entered the swamp the faint twinkle led him on, *ignis fatuus* like, until he found himself in the most miry and spongy portion of this useless part of creation. Here, while toiling forward in pursuit of the vanishing twinkle of the bell, he met with the rather startling adventure with which we opened our story. Having fully recovered from his fright and mental perturbation, he now resumed his hunt.

"It beats all nature how that old cow can travel," was the muttered exclamation of Bowles, as his foot went down to his knee in a hole, and he was thrown forward on his hands and knees. "I've heard the tinkle of that bell for half an hour, and I don't seem any nigher to it than I was when I first came into this infarnal old swamp."

Still the old gentleman pressed forward, not daring and not wishing to show his face in Wallsburg without the brindle cow.

"I'll hunt for her till I find her, if it takes me seventeen weeks," was his resolve, no ways dismayed by the discouragements and obstacles which he constantly encountered. "I put that bell on the critter's neck last spring, and it must be her that's a jingling it— —"

He paused abruptly, for a startling suspicion had taken possession of his mind. Something in the sound of the bell, which at that instant struck upon his ear, arrested his attention, and he paused, almost overcome at the thought.

"Can't be possible? Jingonation! we have been expecting the Mohawks—"

Be it remembered, this was the year of grace, 1777, and the place was Cherry Valley, and the great dread of the inhabitants thereof was of an invasion from the Tories, with their merciless allies the Six Nations. It was while Bowles was pressing eagerly forward in his search for the cow that the peculiarity in the *tink-a-link* of the bell struck his ear, and a suspicion at once struck him that instead of being suspended from the neck of his cow, it was dangling in the hands of an Indian. He paused a moment until he had regained his coolness and presence of mind, a feat which required but a very few moments.

"I've hunted Mohaws before, and they never got the upper hand of me, and I don't intend that they shall do so in my old age. Cynthia wouldn't like it, and I would be ashamed to meet her again, if it should have to be without my skalp."

Rarely was the thought of his better half absent from his mind, and had he been within accessible distance, he would most certainly have consulted her, before engaging in the perilous enterprise which he now resolved to undertake.

He made a careful examination of his rifle. It contained one charge, which was all in his possession. He had brought his gun with him more from habit than any thing else, leaving his powder horn and bullet pouch at home, not dreaming that in his brief hunt for his property, an occasion would rise for his using it.

"It won't do to throw that shot away!" he reflected, "for it is the only one I've got, and I don't think

the redskins will wait for me to run home and git another."

He took the liberty of smiling at his own humor, after which he inclined his head, if possible to determine the precise direction and distance of the bell.

"It lies off here," he added, "that old scamp knows some one will be hunting for that cow and he'll rattle her bell all day, if a feller don't come before, but a feller is going to come before."

Trailing his rifle he began stealing through the wood, taking as much care with his steps, as if he were hoping to get a shot at an antelope. He had progressed but a few hundred yards, when he paused with surprise and indignation—for there cold and lifeless lay the brindle cow, slain by the murderous hand of the Indian who had taken the bell from her neck, and was endeavoring to decoy her owner to his destruction.

Josiah Bowles contemplated her a few moments in silence, and then said,

"That 'ere piece of inhumanity settles the fate of that owdacious redskin. I might have been disposed to show a little mercy, but when this 'ere bullet goes out of this 'ere gun, it is to go into the body of that 'ere Mohawk."

The way the old gentleman compressed his lips and knit his brows showed that he was deeply in earnest, and that when he and the Indian came in collision, one or both of them would be seriously hurt.

"Jingonation! won't Cynthia scold some when she finds that out? Cynthia has a tongue if she is a female, and when she gets her dander up, there's no use of trying to stop her! Wouldn't she yank that Indian 'round if she had hold of him. I wouldn't want to be in his place."

With only one charge in his trusty rifle, Josiah Bowles would have preferred to face a couple of Iraquois Indians in all the paraphranalia of war-paint, dress and tomahawk, than to encounter his better-

half when in one of her tantrum moods. It was terrific.

After carefully listening for a few moments, Bowles succeeded in locating the bell, about two hundred yards distant, which would bring him out of the swamp where the wood was open and clear. Pressing forward in the same deliberate and cautious manner, he soon emerged from the marshy land, and found himself in close proximity to the tintinabulation.

Peering stealthily through the wood, he was not long in desecring an Indian stepping carefully through the trees, holding the cow bell in his right hand, while he slowly shook it from side to side, and turned his head carefully around to gain the first glimpse of the wrathful farmer in search of his cow.

"My rifle is good for that distance," muttered Bowles, as he carefully drew the hammer back, "and if that's your game, I understand what's to be done."

The long gleaming rifle barrel which Josiah Bowles drew to his shoulder and glanced along, had done the same duty before. It had brought down the deer when dashing through the wood, and had sent its fatal messenger crashing through the skull of the black bear when driven at bay, and had sent more than one red Indian to his eternal hunting grounds, when upon the war path; and now as the old man drew his unerring bead, he found that his nerves had no lost their steadiness.

A moment it pointed like the finger of fate, and the next moment the sharp crack broke the stillness and the Mohawk with a piercing screech, threw up his arms and fell dead in his tracks still holding the bell in his rigid grasp. The hunter rushed forward confident that his work was well done. A feeling akin to pity ran through his heart, as he gazed upon the lifeless form of his enemy.

It is a fearful thing to take a human life, even though it be done under circumstances as justifiable as the present.

"I can't say that I coveted your life," mused Bowles, "but you did mine, and I've got a dozen or so children and grand children, besides my four sons in the continental army, fighting for their country under General Washington, and it is just such persons as you that are making all the trouble."

He stooped over the fallen savage and lifted the bell from his iron-like fingers, and looked at it a moment.

"You are an ungodly set of people, and you have many cunning sharp tricks, but when you undertake to tinkle a cow bell, you ought to do it as the cow herself does, and not as a youngster would; that reminds me that there may be more of your people about."

The latter thought was quite a startling one, and occasioned our friend no little uneasiness, especially when he recalled the state of his ammunition supplies.

"The gun is empty, and I haven't enough powder to make a flash in the pan, and the best thing I can do is to get home, for I know Cynthia is beginning to get impatient."

The latter contingency was enough to add wings to the feet of the devoted husband; but before setting out on his return, prudence dictated that he should make somewhat of a reconnoisance of the wood and surrounding country. As a rule, whenever you find a red man, it is safe to suspect there are more, and Josiah Bowles had a tolerably strong conviction that a careful search of the swamp and forest would reveal a party of Mohawks; and such being the case, it was more than likely that they had designs upon Wellsburg which just then was in the worst condition possible to receive such a visit.

The old man made a circuit of several hundred yards, frequently pausing and listening, with all the skill and deliberation of a life-long scout of the woods. His eyes and ears had not lost their cunning, and it was almost impossible that a party could have

been anywhere in the vicinity without making themselves known to him.

The result of his reconnoisance was quite a pleasure to Bowles. He came to the conclusion that the red-skin whom he had slain was some wandering hunter, who having made his way down to these parts, had accidentally come upon the cow, when the dark design entered his head, which had been so happily frustrated through the shortsightedness of the principal actor. Consequently there was no cause for serious alarm.

"I'll hurry home to Cynthia, 'cause it ain't fur off dinner time, and she always gets out of patience when she has to wait for me. It ain't likely there are any more redskins in the neighborhood."

But Mr. Josiah Bowles was wonderfully mistaken, as he was to learn right speedily, and in rather a startling manner.

## CHAPTER II.

## A REMARKABLE ADVENTURE.

Mr. Josiah Bowles having disposed of the Indian, and having pretty thoroughly reconnoitered the swamp, started on his return home, still using caution in his movements, for it was a rule with the old man which he had made years before, that when you don't expect an Indian, it is then that he is pretty certain to appear.

He had progressed several hundred yards in this, when, as he was looking for his horse, he suddenly discovered a savage about a hundred yards ahead. They both detected each other at the same moment, and simultaneously sprang to cover.

Fortunately Bowles was within a few feet of an enormous beech, whose trunk was sufficient to shelter a half dozen such men as he, whose development was principally in a longitudinal direction, and consequently so long as he could keep this comfortable shield between him and his enemy, there was little danger of receiving any bodily harm.

The Iroquois took shelter behind a tree of just sufficient size to screen his person, and there the two races found themselves at bay.

"This is an infernal position for me to be in," muttered the old gentleman with an expression of the most unmitigated disgust. "Here I've got a gun that I can bark a squirrel with, a hundred yards off, and now when there's a bloody minded Mohawk that wants peppering, I haven't got a thimblefull of pow-

der. When I get back home I'll tell Cynthia what an old fool I am, and I hope she'll give me the tallest kind of a blowing up."

Bowles knew it was superfluous for him to entertain any such hope, for the "blowing up" would come as a matter of course; but then it is so pleasant not to be disappointed.

The truth of it was the old gentleman was in rather a perilous situation, as what man would not be, when brought face to face with a thoroughly armed Indian, while he himself was weaponless.

"There's only one thing in my favor—the skunk doesn't know that my gun isn't loaded, and may be I can keep him skeart as much as if it was."

The two stood at bay for perhaps five minutes, when Bowles with the greatest caution peered out from behind the tree, but his head was drawn back again with the quickness of lightning, as he caught the glance of the deadly rifle barrel. It was well he did so, for another second and his skull would have been perforated and his earthly trials ended.

The old man now managed to display his gun-barrel, which had quite a happy effect, as the Iroquois hugged the tree as if it were his dearest brother. Bowles indulged in a quiet but enormous grin,

"The first Injin I ever seen skeart by an empty gun barrel, and I rather reckon he wouldn't have been much skeart if he had only known it. If I only had one charge, I'd skear him more yet—but hang it! what's the use, I hain't got it, and the best thing I can do is to get out of this place as soon as possible, if not sooner.

As a matter of course, both of the opponents were extremely cautious in their actions. If a gun were discharged without fatal effect, the one discharging it was instantly placed at the mercy of the other. This the Indian fully understood, and there was no danger of his firing his gun, until absolutely certain that a repetition was unnecessary.

An Indian or a white hunter in their numerous years of hunting and scouting in the forest, acquires the virtue of patience to a degree, which equals that of the Esquimaux, who will sit hour after hour, without stirring a limb, waiting for the expected seal. It is said by the author of the "Young Pioneer" that Simon Kenton and Daniel Boone once met on the opposite side of a river, and manouvered and reconnoitered from sunrise until sunset before they discovered or suspected that they were friends and not enemies.

So were there nothing to draw Bowles away, he would have maintained his position behind the tree until the darkness of night waiting and watching with the intensity of purpose, which would have detected and taken advantage of a second's remissness upon the part of the Indian, and content and patient until that moment should come.

It would be hard to imagine a situation more uncomfortable, not to say perilous than that of Josiah Bowles. It looked very much as if he were doomed to remain in his present quarters until nightfall, when no doubt, a hand to hand encounter, would be the next thing between him and the agile Iroquois Indian. Twenty years before, he would rather have sought than avoided such a thing; but now with the weight of sixty odd years bearing him down, and his "rheumatises" in every limb, and with nothing except his pocket knife in the way of defence, it cannot be wondered at that he should prefer to withdraw.

At this point it is proper that reference should be made to a haunting fear, which troubled the old man more than anything else. Reference has been made to the rather vigorous temper of Mrs. Cynthia Bowles. She had given positive instructions to her liege lord to return immediately with the brindled cow, or she would be "after him." There had already been a great delay, and Josiah would not have been surprised at any moment, had he heard the shrill voice of his wife singing through the woods, and to see her rather gaunt

form, stalking wrathfully forward in quest of both the cow and himself.

Such a contingency would complicate matters and render them unpleasant.

Bowles therefore looked anxiously about him to see whether there was no possible means by which he could extricate himself without coming in collision with the bullet of his enemy. Finally he hit upon the only plan which offered—highly dangerous, but one which he was willing to undertake.

The gigantic beech behind which he had sheltered himself, stood upon a sort of swell of land, the ground in the rear of Bowles sloping off toward the swamp at a gentle declension. His scheme was to crawl away from the tree, going backwards after the fashion of a crab, until out of the Iroquois field of vision, where, as a matter of course, to affect the remainder of his retreat as he thought best.

The delicate nature of the exploit will be understood, when it is stated that it would be necessary to go very nearly fifty yards in this manner, before it would be safe to assume an upright position, and that in making his retreat the slightest deviation to the right or left, or an undue disturbance of the leaves, so as to give the redskin a suspicion of what was going on, would be followed by the crack of his rifle and unpleasant consequences to our elderly friend. What was required was a quiet celerity of movement, and a steadiness of eye, which would keep the relative situation of the two precisely the same.

As preliminary to his attempt, Bowles darted his head quickly from behind the tree and back again before his dark foe could bring his gun to bear. The momentary glimpse thus obtained remained daguerreotyped upon the eye of Bowles long enough for him to take the exact bearing of the tree behind which the Mohawk was concealed. Thus enlightened, he sank down upon his face, and, clasping his rifle close to his side began his retrograde movement.

If any one doubts the difficulty of crawling backwards, on a mathematical line of fifty yards in extent, he is invited to try the experiment, and his sympathies will be quickly roused for Mr. Josiah Bowles of Cherry Valley. But, as we have intimated in another place Bowles had dealt with Indians before, and he was not deficient in the great requisites of the wood ranger.

The first dozen yards were passed with comparative ease, as it was a matter of small difficulty to keep the enormous tree-trunk between him and his foe; but now with every retreating inch, the danger and delicate nature of the business increased.

This species of locomotion was unnatural and consequently tiresome. For a man who is frequently racked with rheumatism to retrograde in this style is about equal to climbing a tree, and Josiah Bowles found his halt an enforced one necessary for rest and recuperation.

But at this point the adventure of the old gentleman assumed a more fearful phase than he had ever dreamed of. He had slightly raised his body for the purpose of resuming his retreat, when a startling rattle caught his ear, and turning his head, he saw an enormous rattle-snake coiled directly in his path!

The blood of Bowles fairly chilled, as he caught sight of the glittering reptile, and it was only by rare presence of mind that he prevented himself from springing to his feet, and thereby defeating his whole plan of escape.

But Bowles' presence of mind did not desert him, crawling instantly forward a few feet, he turned a quick somerset, thus bringing his head toward the deadly serpent.

The latter had the appearance of not exactly comprehending the meaning of all this. It lay in its beautiful coil, its head erect, its tail slightly rattling, as if it were deliberating upon the best method of striking its blow.

But the old gentleman had outflanked him, the distance being too great for him to strike from his coil, and the question now arose as to how the danger was to be disposed of. It needs no explanation from us to show that it was impossible to turn out six inches in order to avoid it. That would be equally dangerous with an attempt to crawl over it.

Josiah Bowles lay as still as death with his eyes fixed upon the small glittering orbs of the reptile, until he began to feel that its fatal spell was influencing him ; but he discovered this new peril in time ; and, removing his gaze from the snake, he looked over its head at the tree beyond, thus keeping it in his field of vision, but warding off that curious subtle spell by which this species of serpent so frequently hold their prey in a grasp from which they are powerless to escape.

## CHAPTER III.

## A NEW DANGER.

The old man lay as motionless as death, for fully ten minutes, when the reptile began slowly unwinding his coil. He comprehended the meaning of this movement, especially when it began crawling toward him. He had too frequently encountered these dangerous creatures not to understand fully their every whim and movement.

Now came the great trial of his nerves—a trial which is safe to say scarcely a man out of a thousand would have borne unflinchingly. The rattlesnake, in the way peculiar to its kind had imbibed the idea that the man was dead; and, as he lay directly in his path, he had started out with the purpose of crawling over him.

Fortunately old Mr. Bowles comprehended this; and, as he lay so quiet and deathlike upon the ground, he did not even wink an eyelid for fear of un-deceiving him. The tail continued slightly to rattle, and the head was brandished aloft, slightly swaying from side to side all ready to strike the fatal blow, should anything occur to make it necessary.

The slightest inadvertency would have done this. The involuntary movement of the hand, the nervous twitch of the face or a limb would have been followed by the instant drawing back of the small head, and the lightning like darting of the fangs, whose sacs were swollen with poison, and the inevitable death of him who had thus excited his anger.

It would be difficult to describe the emotions of Josiah Bowles as he felt the cold, slimy touch of the reptile upon his hand, and rather felt than saw its tapering, beautiful form (horrid in its beauty) as it crawled by his face.

It could be but a moment, and yet it was one of those moments, which seem like an hour to a man. It was a long time in passing, and for some time after it had gone out of view, he did not move, for fear of feeling its fangs buried in his leg; but finally he ventured to turn his head barely enough to glance behind him. The snake was twenty feet off, gliding quite rapidly over the rustling leaves.

The old man breathed freer, but he was not yet out of danger; but thank heaven! he had but a few more feet to pass over, when the descent of the ground shut him out from view. It was well it were so; for he had gone such a distance from the beech that it could hardly afford a screen to his person much longer.

Bowles did not take the trouble to reverse his position, but pulled himself straight forward, and shortly had the unspeakable relief of feeling that he was out of all immediate peril. A few yards further on his hands and knees, then on his feet in a crouching position, and then he rose to nearly an upright position, and skurried over the ground, as fast as his rheumatic old limbs would permit.

The vigilant Iroquois was left standing behind the tree, intent and watchful for his enemy, the white man, who left him there. For aught we know his skeleton may still be grinning from behind the tree the eyeless sockets peering out at the decaying beech, waiting for his traditional enemy to start forth to view.

The detour which Bowles was thus compelled to make, took him so far from his horse he was compelled to take in nearly half a mile distance in order to reach him. His heart throbbed apprehensively, as he saw that the sun was high in the heavens. He knew that

the wrath of Cynthia Bowles was at the boiling point by this time, but he took a grain of comfort in the thought that by this time she was so angry she could not become any more so.

At any rate, Mr. Bowles concluded that prudence demanded that he should keep a little closer watch upon his footsteps. He had no desire to come upon an armed Indian in the same manner as he had just done, especially as he still carried an empty gun, nor did he feel particularly prepared to go through another meeting with a rattlesnake.

Fully half an hour had passed ere he came round to the place where he had tied his switch-tailed mare.

"Jingo! I'm tired," he muttered, "and now I'll rest myself by taking a ride—"

He paused abruptly, for there where his mare should have been she was not.

"Gone! stole?" he gasped, "not satisfied with killing poor old brindle, they've gone and stole the mare. Jingo! won't Cynthia tear round and break things?"

The latter likelihood seemed more dreadful to contemplate than any prospective danger from the Iroquois. But in the midst of Mr. Bowles' utter despair he was gratified by a sight of his switch-tailed pacer, who had quietly slipped her halter, and was browsing upon the tender buds and shoots which grew so plentifully around her. She was easily approached and the halter slipped over her head again, when Mr. Bowles vaulted as lightly upon her back as though he felt not the weight of over three score years, and twenty years racking from rheumatism.

"Now we'll go hum," he added to his animal, "for I don't blame Cynthia if she's a little out of patience for I've been gone a long while."

Dismal forebodings took possession of the mind of Mr. Bowles, as he pictured his spouse waiting at the end of Wellsburg for the return of him and the faithful brindle. It was his intention to forestall her fury,

by presenting her with the bell of the cow, thus quelling her anger by raising the more powerful emotion of curiosity; but in his laborious escape from the clutches of the Iroquois, he had been compelled to part with this so that he might save his own bacon.

Our readers will bear in mind, that the incidents we are relating are supposed to have occurred in the neighborhood of Cherry Valley, in the year of 1777. Portions of the fertile vale were thickly populated, while others had as yet been trodden by scarcely any one except the red Indian and wild animal.

Josiah Bowles, in his search for his cow had traversed the main road for a considerable distance, when he turned across an open field, and entered the border of a vast wood, which extended far into the country and contained many an acre that was considered the almost undisputed property of the Iroquois and wild animals.

When the war of the revolution broke out, this became a constant source of dread to the peaceful settler as it offered a secure hiding place to the ruthless Indian, who could descend upon their peaceful settlements during the darkness of the night, strike their murderous blow, and withdraw unsheathed and unharmed.

After emerging from the open wood, Bowles found himself in a sort of cow path, which looking as though it would lead him out at a proper point; he followed at a leisurely gait, and as he bounded up and down on the bony back of his switch-tailed mare, he mused with himself—

“ Won’t Cynthia be excited when she learns the brindle cow is no more? She was a splendid animal, and I don’t wonder that Colonel Wells used to brag on her so much—hello! what’s gettin’ to be the matter with the mare?”

The animal in question had suddenly stopped trotting, and manifested a strong reluctance to proceed.

ing farther. Her head was erect, her ears thrown forward, and she snuffed the air as though she scented danger. Her rider peered forward as far as he could discern, but could detect nothing to cause apprehension.

"Hang it!" he muttered, "I've seen so much of Injins to-day when I didn't expect 'em, that I would not be 'spised if there were some of 'em hereabouts. If there be any more of them infarnal Mohawks, they will soon be down in Wellsburg, tearing round and smashing up things and killing of us. Jingo! but Colonel Wells ought to know about this."

By this time Bowles was becoming really nervous. He had certainly undergone enough to try the self-possession of a wood-ranger, and he had borne it remarkably well. The truth of it was, he was about "used up," and unfit for anything further. Had he been called upon to go through the same ordeal again, he would have failed.

He debated with himself a considerable time, as to whether he should proceed or turn about and go back. If there was danger, he felt that he ought to know it, so as to give the needful warning and information to the settlement, and especially to Colonel Wells, who was looked up to in all matters of public interest, as counsellor and guide. Whether to dismount from his horse or not was the all-important question. But time was precious, and after a few minutes thought he began riding slowly forward.

Carefully as this was done it narrowly escaped being fatal. He had turned a bend in the path, and was leaning anxiously forward, when he caught a glimpse of forms moving to and fro, and realized that he had narrowly escaped riding into an encampment of Indians.

This was enough, or rather too much for Josiah. Without stopping to see whether he had been discovered, he wheeled his horse around, and thundering

his heel's against her sides, started her off at a full run.

In a short time they emerged from the woods, and the fleet-footed animal fairly flew down the field, vaulting over the stone wall into the main road, down which the old man thundered fairly wild with terror.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE ALARM.

The Mohawks are coming over the hills! They'll soon be here!"

While yet beyond hearing of the little village of Wellsburg, Bowles was shouting at the top of his voice, in the hope of arousing his friends and neighbours, who were oblivious of the dreadful danger close at hand,

Suddenly he saw a form in the road and observed that he was making signals to him. Peering over the head of his horse, and through the dust of the beaten road, he immediately recognized Colonel Wells, the head man of the village, who was waving his cane, as a summons for him to stop.

No need of that; he was the man who, above all others, Bowles wished to see; and, boiling over with news, he reigned up the mare beside him in the road, with such suddenness as to throw her on her haunches, and caused the words to appear as if shot from between the lips of the rider.

"What does all this excitement mean?" asked the smiling Colonel Wells, in the most pleasant and deliberate of voices, and without a trace of alarm in his own countenance.

"What does it mean? Why, that a thousand Injins are coming over the hills, straight for Wellsburg."

"Ah!"

"Yes; and every one of them is in war paint, with a rifle and tomahawk!"

"Indeed! then you must have seen them?"

"Yes."

"Did you count them?"

"No; of course not; but I could tell pretty nearly how many there were."

"There were a thousand, then?"

"Very near, I'm sure,"

"All in their war paint?"

"They looked so, from where I saw them."

"And where was that?"

Bowles pointed backward, toward a wooded range of hills, about two miles distant, lying off to the left of the main road.

"How was it that you came to see them?"

"Why, I was looking for our old brindle cow, that wandered off last night, when I heerd a kind of yell, and looked off down the hill, when, hang me if I didn't see the whole pack."

"How long did you stay?"

"Just long enough to see that they were Mohawk Indians on the war-path, and then I straddled the mare, and the way I came tearing out from the woods was a caution. But, Colonel, they will soon be here, and we have no time to wait.

"I understand Josiah, but I wish to ask a few more questions, for I want to learn all I can about this danger. I see you are excited"—

"Hang it! ain't it enough to make a fellow tear his shirt? I've got a wife and thirteen children and little grandchildren down in that village, and I ain't quite ready to see 'em chopped up, for all four of my sons are fighting under General Washington."

"You are right, but you can do nothing while you are in this condition. Cool down so as to have your wits about you. I will walk beside you to the village and we will talk as we go."

This arrangement Bowles could not object to, although it did not precisely suit him; for he was just in that condition of mind when he longed to dash

through the place, his hair flying and he yelling "Injins" loud enough to split the ears of all within hearing. The coolness and apparent indifference of Colonel Wells nettled him, but there was no remedy.

"Now," said the latter, "this is a great peril and we must prepare for it. How was it Josiah that you knew them to be Mohawk Indians?"

"Bless you, Colonel, wasn't I prisoner among 'em thirty years ago? Didn't they come on to me and my brother, when we war choppin' wood and shoot him with fifty bullets, while they carried me off a hundred miles in the woods and kept me for two weeks?"

"How did you get away?"

"The Lord done it," said Bowles, reverentially. "I give 'em the slip one dark, rainy night, hid my trail, by hugging a log and swimming down the Mohawk all night, and hiding in the trees along shore in the day time. So I got back home and I think I learned enough about Mohawk Injins to tell 'em when I see 'em, if there happens to be nigh unto a thousand of 'em."

"Yes; I think you might have learned that much at the very least. You are sure they intend paying us a visit!"

"Just as sure as I am that I'm a settin' on the best mare in Cherry Valley. Hang me, Colonel, you orter seen it streak through the woods!" exclaimed old Mr. Bowles, oblivious to every fact for the time, except the beauties and accomplishments of the switch-tailed pacer, clasped so lovingly between his knees.

"You know, after you get off the main road, up among the woods there's nothing but a bridle path. Wal, when the mare snuffed the danger—and I believe she seed 'em afore I did, she came tearing thro' the bridle-path like a cannon ball. If I hadn't just laid down on her back and hugg'd her neck, I'd have had my head knocked off a dozen times afore we got out the woods; but I say Colonel," added Josiah, growing fidgety again, "how about the Injins?"

"How soon do you think they will be here?"

"Right away! Right off!" the old man fairly shouted in his hurry.

"Sh! not so loud! They cannot come as soon as that. It must be several hours before they can get here."

"No, sir!" was the emphatic contradiction.

"Well, we have an hour at least—short enough time, it is true, but still long enough for us to make ample preparations, I trust, to repel this invasion. You think they didn't see you?"

"I'm sure they didn't; they were not marching, but appeared to have halted and encamped for a little while."

"Ah! that makes it look more favorable still; that will give us more time."

"If they had been marching they would have seen me, and sent a hundred bullets after me as I turned to run; but I didn't hear the crack of a gun or the least noise after I started."

During this rather brief and hurried conversation between Colonel Wells and old Mr. Bowles, the latter had been casting furtive glances over his mare's shoulder towards the village, for he had uttered but a few words, when he descried a tall, rather gaunt female striding rapidly down the road toward him. One glance was sufficient for him to identify her.

"Where have you been all this time? You're a purty man, ain't you? What have you been doing?"

"My dear Cynthia—"

"Don't you *dear Cynthia* me; this is a pretty time to come home, ain't it? Where's the brindle?"

"If you will only give me time my dear wife—"

"Where is the brindle cow, I say?"

"Dead!"

"DEAD!" shrieked Mrs. Bowles, starting back in amazed horror. "What do you mean?"

"She is dead as sure as you live."

"How? Who?"

"The Mohawks killed her."

Mr. Bowles accomplished quite a point, and he now felt quite at ease. His wife looked the questions which she could not frame the words to utter.

"Yes, dear Cynthia, there is something like a thousand Mohawks back among the hills, over there by the woods, and they'll soon be down here to tomahawk and scalp us all."

How cool and collected the husband appeared, when he felt he was the repository of such important information, and that in short he was master of the situation, and that for the time Cynthia's wrath was driven to the winds.

Mrs. Bowles changed on the instant.

"My dear Josiah, I must see to them boys and girls this minute. They're scattered every where—the poor dears."

And she strode rapidly away, all unmindful of everything else except her rather numerous progeny.

"Now," said Josiah, addressing Colonel Wells, "she understands matters, and observe how she'll manage things. My wife is a woman of mind."

"Well, Josiah, don't let your fears run away with your wits. You are trembling and excited."

"Ain't it enough to make a man rather nervous?"

"Well, here we are on the edge of the village, and the people are already frightened. It is high time we began making our preparations."

## CHAPTER V.

WELLSBURG.

One of the cosiest, old-fashioned villages that ever went to sleep away out in the country, was that of Wellsburg, in Cherry Valley.

The houses numbered about twenty, the most of which had been built at least fifty years before, when a few sturdy settlers, on their way to Western New York, encamped on the small stream one night, and were so struck with its romantic beauty that they went no further, but straightway began a settlement then and there.

The buildings were made of heavy logs, put together in a manner that showed the architects were not oblivious to the fact, that their claim to this charming nook in the forest was not likely to remain for ever undisputed—that, in fact, it was pretty sure that certain aboriginal gentlemen of a reddish complexion, were very likely to advocate their claims to the same property.

Their prudence proved their safety, and many were the sanguinary contests between them and the Indians; but we have to do with events of a later date, and we can only refer casually to those in the early history of the settlement, to show that an infant born and nursed in such a stormy period could not be found in the vigor of manhood, unprepared for the storm that was to burst over it.

About twenty years before the breaking out of the American Revolution, Colonel Clarence Wells, a mid-

idle-aged and wealthy man moved into the settlement, bringing with his family several emigrants. He began at once the construction of his house, which, when finished was of about three times the capacity and strength of any of the others, and at once took upon himself more the character of a fort than anything else.

Colonel Wells immediately assumed the character of a leader in the small settlement. His pleasant, affable manner, his refined and courteous demeanor, his known wealth, his military ability, together with several grievous wounds which had sent him out of the French war before its conclusion—these, with his admirable social qualities, made him the man at once, and decided the name of the little collection of houses, which had so long needed an appellation.

Colonel Wells' coming seemed to be a fortunate one for the little settlement—for it was a singular coincidence that, although the summer before his arrival had been characterized by one of the largest and most furious assaults to which the little place had ever been subjected, yet not a hostile shot was exchanged during the first season he spent in this out-of-the-way place.

Year after year stole away, and although the ever-watchful Five Nations were striking here and there and everywhere, yet the settlement was unharmed until twenty summers and winters had come and gone, and the Revolution broke out. This immunity from danger, to say the least was singular, and excited no little remark among the settlers, who could imagine no reason for it, except that Colonel Wells possessed some extraordinary and unquestioned power over the surrounding Indians. Whence he derived this power it was impossible to tell, that is, if he really had any such influence. The Colonel was a great hunter, and frequently spent days and days in wandering into the woods, striking straight into the heart of the Indian country, and pursuing his game into the hunting

grounds, whither the most intrepid backwoodsman dare not venture. He had a wonderful skill in the use of his long English rifle, and the sharp crack of the piece as it exploded in the forest, was sure to be the death warrant of some game worthy of a true hunter's skill.

At the time to which we refer, Colonel Wells had one child, a lovely daughter, twenty years of age, who was the life and joy of his household. A twin brother of hers had been buried a dozen years before, and his grave was made in a quiet nook in the wood, whither the surviving friends could retire and weep in silence.

The breaking out of the Revolutionary war drained Wellsburg of nearly all its male inhabitants. The little place was intensely loyal and sent all her able-bodied men to the war, leaving Colonel Wells, old Josiah Bowles, and several other superannuated old gentlemen, a few boys and all the women and children.

The security which had rested over Wellsburg for a score of years now vanished, and those left behind became a prey to all the fear, apprehension and terror which took possession of the exposed village and settlement during the trouble between the colonies and the mother country.

Colonel Wells' first proceeding was to see that his house was put in the best position for defense. Additional port holes were pierced, green logs replaced many of those that had become dry and seasoned, a sort of trap-door was arranged, from which, under protection of a bullet-proof planking, water could be thrown on the burning roof; a well was sunk in one quarter of the large building, and a quantity of provisions and ammunition was always stored there, so that every appliance was at hand wherewith to stand a protracted siege.

The officer wandered through the woods as much

as ever, but he was never away from home over night, nor even after it was dark. The crack of his rifle was seldom heard, and he appeared to spend his time in watching for the first appearance of danger.

Mary Wells had started off on a ramble through the woods several times, but, on each occasion she encountered her father, who kindly but firmly sent her back again, with the advice never to go out of sight of her home without the company of himself or some one who was able to protect her. He told her there was danger lurking in the very air, liable to burst at any moment.

The long immunity from disturbance enjoyed by the sleepy little village made many of the inhabitants forgetful of the increasing peril. They would believe nothing of the threatened trouble until it was really upon them, no matter what the warnings were and how repeatedly they might be uttered.

But Colonel Wells was no alarmist. He simply reminded those around him of the necessity for watchfulness, the danger of straying away from the settlements and the possibility of an Indian invasion at any moment.

This, at first, as might naturally be expected, threw many of the older people almost into hysterics of terror, but as time wore on, and nothing was seen or heard of the Indians, this apprehension gradually died out, until the little place bid fair to relapse into the sleepy languor which had characterized the score of years preceding the war.

Now and then a flutter was caused by the arrival of some runner at the village—some friendly Indian known to all—who brought rumors of the fierce conflicts going on between the Americans and the Indians and Tories, and the ravages committed by the latter, who devastated some of the fairest portions of our fair country.

But again, as time passed on, and nothing more was

seen or heard of the affrighted runner, the old fear passed away, and they came to have an abiding faith, under heaven in Colonel Wells, whose presence for so long a time had seemed to hold a charm over them—a sort of magic protection—which could not be broken or dispelled.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE LOVERS.

Our readers must bear with us a few minutes longer while we delay plunging into the whirl and thunder of this extraordinary invasion of Cherry Valley, by the Iroquois Indians. The critical times are close at hand, but we have an episode to dispose of before we plunge into the stirring incidents.

Among the youth who had been born and raised in Wellsburg, was Edward Sutherland, whose father died while the boy was in his infancy, and he was left alone with his widowed mother. He was a remarkable bright child, whose good behaviour rendered him a favorite with all, and when just before the breaking out of the Revolution his mother died and he was left alone, the villagers mourned as much for his grief, as they did for the departure of the good woman.

The war of independence had hardly begun, when Edward, who was hardly of age, headed the small party of young men who left the settlement and joined the Continental army under General Washington.

On the evening before his departure young Sutherland might have been seen walking slowly along the margin of the stream, which skirted the settlement, while leaning upon his arm was Mary, the bright-eyed daughter of Colonel Wells.

Mary was a year or two younger than her companion, and they had been universally regarded as entertaining a rather tender passion toward each other, and it was the universal verdict that no couple could be found better fitted for each other.

Colonel Wells, who no doubt was entitled to say the most on this question, was never heard to say anything. There can be little doubt but that he comprehended the situation of affairs, but, as to his views, up to the present writing none were enlightened; but judging from his usual shrewdness and good sense we are safe in supposing that he held no objection to it.

Young Sutherland was about as poor as a man can well be, and still maintain an appearance of respectability; but while thus unfortunate, his situation had none of the embarrassments of poverty peculiar to more civilized portions of our country; for in Wellsburg all were poor, in a certain sense, excepting, perhaps Colonel Welles, who had brought a goodly fortune there, and who had increased it during the many years he had spent in the wilderness.

The two walked in silence for a time, for if a young maiden can be pardoned for feeling somewhat sad, it is when she is about to bid good-bye to her lover going to the war.

"You have no idea when you will be back," she said in her honest tones, for she was determined not to entertain the thought of his falling in battle.

"Yes, I have," he replied, somewhat gaily.

"When?" she asked, her countenance brightening up.

"When the war is finished and our independence secured."

"Oh! yes," she said, her countenance falling again, "but is that to be one, three, or ten years?"

"It is safe to believe that it will be a good long while—no doubt long to you, and long to me; but you must keep up a good heart, and hope for the best. I hope I shall see you before the war ends."

"How?" she inquired, not comprehending him.

"There will be times, no doubt, when I shall be able to get off on furlough, and I shall hasten home, you may be sure."

"And it may become necessary for you to come here to defend the settlement from the Indians and British?"

"I hope not."

"And so do I."

"But if danger threatens this place I shall be the first to come, and I only hope that I may be in time to prevent your suffering any fright even."

"I don't care much about the fright if we are not harmed. I believe fright does not often hurt a person, and I don't think it will harm us."

There were many words to say, and the two wandered along by the brook, until the day waned, when they returned home. Sutherland spent the evening in her society, and on the morrow morning waved her a merry farewell from the top of an adjoining hill, where he and his comrade passed a few moments to take a parting look at their homes.

We have not the space, nor is it our purpose to follow young Sutherland through his varied adventures in the Revolution, but only give those which more nearly concerns the little settlement of Wellsburg, in Cherry Valley.

The fine young American recruits had progressed about a dozen miles through the forests in Central New York, when they halted upon the banks of a small stream to prepare their noon-day meal. While thus engaged a little dog, the property of one of their number, snuffed the air, whined and gave evidence that he scented danger.

"Bowser smell something," said his owner.

"Nothing but his dinner," remarked another, "that's all he's good for."

"You will see," was the reply.

The question was speedily answered by the parting of the undergrowth, and the sudden appearance of an Indian in his war-paint. The smile and pleasant looks which lit up the faces of the young men, showed that he was neither a stranger nor an enemy. He advanced straight to the men and shook hands with all, accompanying the salutation with a few words in broken English, expressive of the pleasure in seeing

them, while they did the same in better Anglo-Saxon.

Between Sutherland and the Indian there seemed to exist a special friendship, and the dusky visitor held his hand for some moments.

"On your tramps, Peqwaski?"

"Yes; I be come to see you."

"Glad to see you; we had missed you so long from the vicinity of our home that we thought you had forgotten us."

"Me no forget."

"See here, what are you doing?" asked the young patriot, as if a sudden thought had just seized him.

"Me hunter."

"Well, we are on our way to Albany to join the army, and to help General Washington to fight against the British, and it isn't going to be the easiest thing in the world to get there. You see we ain't out of the woods yet."

"I see," replied Peqwaski, taking him literally.

"And why can't you guide us till we get beyond danger?"

"Me can do it."

"Will you?"

"Me will."

"Well, that's the way to talk," laughed one of the young friends. "That bargain was soon made."

"That is the way Peqwaski and I deal with each other," said Sutherland, who was indeed glad to meet his friend.

There were some peculiar facts connected with Peqwaski. He was a full-blooded Mohawk, and was one of those who had been brought under the influence of Sir William Johnson. He was devoted to the British interests, and there was no doubt that during the impending war, his power and hatred would be felt by the Americans, for he was a warrior of extraordinary courage and skill.

And yet, Peqwaski, for the last few years had man-

ifested an ardent friendship for Col. Wells and young Sutherland—a friendship so strong that it would override everything else and cause him to brave anything in their behalf should it become necessary.

Why he held these men in such high esteem, it would be impossible to say. He had struggled into the settlement, and at the very first sight of Colonel Wells, told him as well as his broken utterance would permit that he had lost a brother years before, and that he had dreamed that Colonel Wells was to supply his place—and to this arrangement the shrewd man assented, particularly as no bad results could flow from it, while the far-seeing man comprehended that it was by no means improbable that it might evenuate in benefit to himself and to the entire settlement.

This was years before, when Edward Sutherland was quite a boy, yet when Peqwaski caught sight of him he manifested a no less powerful attachment. He presented him with wampum, and numerous trinkets, and invited him to accompany him home. This seemed too perilous a favor to grant, but in the course of a year the boy assented, and was gone for a month, much to the terror of his mother and friends, but he safely returned and gave a glowing account of all that he had seen and heard during his sojourn among the Iroquois.

This, by way of introduction, will explain the state of feeling between the two. They were always friends, although it was well understood, that against the white race in general Peqwaski entertained no feelings except those of hatred. It was well known that he was engaged in warlike incursions against the neighboring settlement, but those in Wellsburg feared him not.

The friendly Indian accepted the office of guide with an alacrity which testified his sincerity, and none of them had any hesitation in trusting him implicitly. He led them with the unerring skill of the greyhound through the trackless woods, and a few days later

they emerged into the highway which led from Central New York to Albany, and arrived shortly after.

Peqawaski persisted in accompanying them the entire distance, although to tell the truth, they were rather anxious to be rid of his company; for knowing the sentiments he held toward their own kindred, they would have preferred that he should remain as far away from them as possible. But he left them with an expression of good-will and with the promise to warn Edward Sutherland if any danger should threaten Wellsburg.

Peqawaski's subsequent actions proved that he did not forget his promise. In this same year of grace, 1777, and a few weeks previous to the invasion of the Mohawk Valley, young Sutherland being with that wing of the Continental army, which was operating in the middle States, obtained a Month's furlough for the purpose of visiting his home in Wellsburg. Any one who has been in the army knows how eagerly such a boon is received by the soldier; and permission was scarcely granted to the young lieutenant, when he was on his way to Cherry Valley.

One of the men who accompanied him when two years before he left Wellsburg had been killed in battle, while the others who had made application for a similar favor were refused. Consequently our hero made the first part of his journey alone.

But when a few miles from home, and on the very day which witnessed the remarkable adventures of Josiah Bowles already recorded, as good fortune would have it he encountered his old Mohawk friend, Peqwaski, who communicated the alarming intelligence, that a large party of the Five Nations were on the march to attack Wellsburg.

And this brings us back again to old Mr. Bowles and his switch-tailed mare, as he and Colonel Wells entered the village, and now came the whirl, and tumult and peril, and warfare, such as never could be forgotten by Cherry Valley.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MOVING DAY.

As the horsemen and footmen entered the little settlement of Wellsburg, the coolness of the latter only rendered the former more uneasy.

"Hang me, Colonel, I can't stand this," he abruptly called out. "Only think, them bloody Mohawks may be coming over the hill this very minute, and them people don't know anything about it, not to mention them thirteen children and grandchildren of mine—Gee-up!"

Away like an arrow shot the switch-tailed mare, and the rider at once boiled over.

"Injins! Mohawks! They are coming over the hills a thousand strong, and will soon be here!"

It required but a short time for the tidings to go round the little settlement. The women with pale cheeks, open mouths, and staring eyes, came rushing forth, and, with rapidly throbbing hearts gathered around the old man.

"Where?"

"How far off?"

"How soon will they be here?"

Such and similar were the questions that were poured forth continuously, that Bowles answered them in a lump:

"I seen 'em up over the hills. They'll be here mighty quick. You hain't got no time to spare—not a bit. Get your duds and youngsters, and pile into the fort, just as quick as you know how."

At this point Colonel Wells made his appearance, and the eager, gasping, affrighted people were instantly transferred to him.

"Oh, what shall we do? what shall we do?" some of them already beginning to sob.

"The first thing to be done is to stop all this hub-bub," was the reply uttered in the same pleasant, smiling manner, that he would have advised them to go on a pic-nic.

"But heavens o'nath!" exclaimed Mrs. Bowles, "did you hear what my old man said?"

"I think every one within a half a mile heard him."

"Well! he says there be a thousand of 'em."

"My friends!" called Colonel Wells, in a louder voice, and addressing the entire settlement who had gathered around him, "there is no occasion for all this hub-bub, but there is need of hurry. Gather all your most valuable articles and carry them into my house. Be careful, first, to get all your children together, and next to that take in all the guns and ammunition you can scare up. Now, go to work."

As they did, a scene of the most indiscriminate confusion followed. It became plain at once that each family considered the most valuable portion of their furniture the whole furniture itself, and began carrying it piecemeal within the large house, more generally known as "the Fort."

This could not be allowed, and Colonel Wells at once forbade it. He told them to bring in their provisions and ammunition, and a few other indispensable articles, but he peremptorily refused to allow any of the lumber or cumbrous furniture to be carried within his building.

"You see, Josiah, it would do no good," he remarked to the old man who had dismounted, tied his horse to a stake in the middle of the village, and was now standing with folded arms talking to Colonel Wells. "You see that if I should allow them all to carry their entire furniture in, the building would be so filled with them that there would be no room for any of us; while, if I should allow a part, it will impede our movement. We must have unrestrained

liberty within, and if we didn't there is no reason for discriminating between any of the families."

"You are right Colonel, you can help their totting, as it is a big 'nough pite in there to make a powerful bother to us."

"I shall have it stored in the cellar as soon as they are through—that is, the most part of it."

"A good idea, if you've only got room"—

"You're a purty old man, ain't you!" came the shrill voice of Mrs. Bowles, as she caught the elbow of her husband and jerked him half way round. "You're a purty old lazy hulk, ain't you? here I'm working myself to death e'enmost, and you stand here gabbing with Colonel Wells who don't want to speak a word to you. Come along, I say!" she screamed, almost jerking him off his feet. "What you going to do with them blessed thirteen children, every one of 'em like a wild Injin?"

"Jingo! I forgot all about 'em."

"You're a purty husband and father and grandfather ain't you, forget all about your children! I declar' to gracious, if it was so I'd be ashamed to own it. There goes Jedediah and Jemima! See if you've got enough gumption to 'tend to them!"

The two children referred to constituted all the children of Mr. and Mrs. Bowles that were in the village at the time, except two married girls, or rather women, who were busy enough in attending to their particular duties, without devoting any time to those of others. Jedediah was twelve and Jemima was fourteen years of age. The confusion was a source of vast delight to them, and they were running hither and thither shouting at the tops of their voices.

"Mr. Bowles' first proceeding was to give each of these hope-fuls a smart shaking and then to run them into the fort, as we sometimes hurry a frightened animal over a shaky bridge, by taking it by the head and rushing across before it had time to yield to terror. Once fairly within the bulwark the two children knew

enough of their father's wrath to remain there without attempting to steal out again.

"Yonder goes Joshua Thomas!" shrieked Mrs. Bowles. "Oh! what a boy that Joshua Thomas is! Mind I tell you young man, one of these days I'll get hold of you and settle up for all this!" and she shook her fist at the urchin, as he turned a summerset and disappeared behind one of the houses. However, before he could rise he was grasped by the ankle, slung over the shoulder of his muscular grandfather and hurried into the fort with the others.

"O, Josiah!" came in more fearful tones than ever. "Yonder goes Jerusha Ann, astraddle of that 'ere dog!" and she pointed to a dumpy youngster of the feminine gender, who was seated upon a huge Newfoundland dog, that was trotting very deliberately off in the direction of the hills, over which for every minute during the last half hour the Iroquois were coming.

"Catch 'em! catch 'em!" screamed Mrs. Bowles. "That 'ere plagued dog'll tote her right off to the Injins afore you can stop 'em. I declare to gracious what a tom-boy that Jerusha Ann is getting. That 'ere dog shall be killed, just to keep her from making a tom-boy of herself. Won't her father give it to her when he comes back from fightin' under General Washington."

As a short method of bringing matters to a focus, Mr. Bowles called to the dog, which, whirling round rather suddenly caused his rider to roll over on the ground. This necessitated a hurried run to the spot by the grandfather, who picked her up and transported her into the house precisely as he had done the preceding one.

"That makes all!" said Mrs. Bowles, in a more contented strain, as she looked about her as a hen does over her numerous brood. "Yonder stands Colonel Wells down at the end of the village! Why don't he come in, afore he gets shot?"

"He's motioning for me to go to him!" replied her husband, "I suppose he sees something of the Injins."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### DANGER.

Before old Mr. Bowles reached Colonel Wells, another figure flitted to view and running lightly over the intervening space, caught both his hands in her own.

"O father! isn't this dreadful!"

The flowing hair was brushed away from the rosy face, and an affectionate kiss implanted upon the lips before the parent made reply.

"Isn't what dreadful, my child?"

"Why, father, you've heard how a thousand Indians are coming out of the woods yonder with guns and knives and are going to kill us all."

"I have heard something about it, I believe—I think old Mr. Bowles brought some such rumor."

"O father! how can you talk so? You don't seem to be the least bit frightened."

"I'm surprised to see you make such a little dunce of yourself. I'll warrant you, your mother hasn't made one tenth the fuss you are creating."

"No; she seems just like you, not the least bit scared. She stands there telling the half crazy people where to place their goods, just as though it were moving day, and they were all her servants."

"How much more sensible than her daughter?"

"I suppose she is," replied Mary, blushing and smiling, "but are you not frightened?"

"I am a little uneasy, for I suppose we shall have trouble."

"Do you think we shall drive them away?"

"One thing is certain; we shall not be able to do

so, if every one shows as little presence of mind as my daughter."

The tears came to Mary's eyes, for she felt the rebuke keenly.

"I could not help it father, when old Mr. Bowles said there were a thousand of them, coming as fast as they could, and he expected to see them every minute."

"There! there! never mind!" said Colonel Wells, again kissing his child. "Go back to the fort and teach the others to keep cool, for their only safety lies in their doing so."

"But are you going to remain here?"

"Only a few minutes, to keep watch of our visitors as they come in sight. Perhaps I may escort them in," laughed the Colonel, as he motioned to his daughter to hurry away to the fort. She gave him a reproachful but loving look, as she turned on her heel and ran lightly to the fort, within which she instantly vanished.

Old Mr. Bowles advancing with long, rapid strides, and panting from the severe exertions undergone in capturing his grandchildren, now halted in front of Colonel Wells and gasped out.

"Seen 'em yit?"

"No; I have detected no signs of their approach."

"Strange, ain't it; they must be getting good and ready."

"You are sure you saw a large war-party, Josiah?"

The injured look which the old man bestowed on his interlocutor was a sufficient answer to this question.

"I tell you them Iroquois are a bloody set of scamps, and the very worst lot among them are the Mohawks. You see, Colonel, I know something about them dogs, and I shouldn't wonder now if some of the very ones that nabbed me when I was chopping wood with my brother years ago are in that crowd."

"Do you suppose they would remember you?"

"Can't say, but I believe I'd remember them."

"Well, Josiah, I believe every thing is fixed at the house, isn't it?"

"Think it is; leastways my wife and our thirteen children and grandchildren are stowed away somewhere in there. I'm sure they're the most vallyblo part of our furniture."

"All the rest of the people are in?"

"I think they be, I don't see any out, except your darter, and she's inside."

"Then there isn't much danger of her being outside," replied the Colonel, who was determined to have his joke at all times.

"No; I s'pose not."

"See here, Josiah," continued the officer, becoming serious. "You are pretty well acquainted with the ways of Indians, ain't you?"

"I think I orter be."

Which was the most emphatic manner possible for the old gentleman to answer the question in the affirmative.

"Well, I'm going to ask a rather dangerous exploit of you, and one which you can do as you please about performing."

"Let's hear it."

"When you saw those Indians you were so frightened that you had no idea of their exact number. I want you to reconnoiter them and find out just about how many there are, for you understand how important it is that we should know just the strength of those that are going to be opposed to us."

"Jes' so, Colonel, but what's to hinder our counting them as they come up through the village?"

Colonel Wells smiled before replying.

"You pretend to be acquainted with Indian ways, do you. Did you ever know a savage force, especially if they were Iroquois, to give you a chance to count them?"

"I declare you are right; I didn't think of that; but havn't I seen them already?"

"Yes; but I don't know their number—whether there are fifty or five hundred. They will, no doubt, make a demand upon us to surrender, and I can then tell whether it is best for us to make terms or not. However, I don't wish to urge you to the step unless you are perfectly willing yourself."

"Oh! I'll go! I'll go!" exclaimed the old man eagerly, to show that it was not fear that had restrained him before.

"I don't want you to perform a duty that I am unwilling to attempt myself. I wish to go off through the woods to our right yonder, while you take the left. When we come back we will compare notes, and no doubt get a true idea of our enemies."

"But, s'pose, Colonel, they got us both! Heavens o'math! that would never do. What would become of our folks, 'specially them thirteen children and grandchildren of mine?"

"We musn't allow ourselves to run into too much danger."

"In course we don't expect to run into it, but how are we going to hinder it when there are Injins around. No, sir. Colonel Wells, if I go, you stay, and if you go, I stay; but, being as you're rather stiff from your wounds, it won't do for you to undertake it."

"I am certainly willing to do my part, although it looks somewhat rash for us both to run our heads into danger."

"You're right, jes' so, 'twon't never do; I've been exercisin' meself so a catchin' of them younkers, that my rheumatiz is all gone, and I feel as if my jints had been iled."

"Then be off at once and be very careful."

"I'm your man."

Josiah Bowles sprang upon the back of his switch-tail mare and started off at once on a rapid gallop

down the road, intending to conceal his animal in the wood, and continue his reconnoissance on foot.

Colonel Wells was attentively observing him, when a shout from the fort caught his ear, and turning his head he saw his daughter and several other making excited gestures and pointing toward the woods on the south. It required but a glance for him to see that there was good cause for their alarm!

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## CHAPTER IX.

### TWO NARROW ESCAPES.

As Colonel Wells turned his head to the right, he saw three Indians—each with a gun in his hand, in a crouching position, endeavoring to steal in between him and the fort.

They had already reached such a point as to cut off his return by the direction in which he had left it. Should he run at the top of his speed, they could easily reach the fort first, and confront him while fully fifty feet from it.

But the Colonel could not run, as his wounds prevented, and unfortunately he had no gun with him, so that certainly he was in a bad situation, growing worse and worse each moment, as the tattooed heads and stooping shoulders of the Iroquois could be seen advancing nearer and nearer the fort each moment.

Colonel Wells took in the situation at a glance and acted promptly. Instead of turning his face toward the fort, he ran directly from it nearly in the same direction as directed by old Mr. Bowes, except that he turned off from the road and made straight for the woods.

This looked as if he were seeking shelter there, but it was in reality for a far different purpose. He had

taken scarcely a dozen steps, when a short but deep declivity, assisted by his own prone position, shut him out from view. The Mohawks supposing he was running for the forest, now rose to their feet, and started straight toward the point where he had been last seen.

The moment Colonel Wells felt himself free from observation, he turned his course at right angles and hurried along the edge of the bank, which extended along the western side of the settlement, and which if followed would lead him within a hundred yards of the fort.

Thus it was, that while the breathless spectators in the fort were watching for his re-appearance beyond the bank and in the margin of the woods, and the Indians were straining every muscle to reach the spot as soon as he, his head rose to view behind the row of cabins confronting the fort, and he made a gesture of silence to his friends, who despaired him the very instant he showed himself.

Unfortunately one of the Iroquois, as he ran across the intervening space, explained the curious non-appearance of the fugitive in the correct manner; and, as his comrades ran on, he turned off and took a direction parallel with the bank, his eye flitting in advance of his feet, until he despaired his prey to rise to view, and the two saw each other at the same instant.

The exultant Mohawk gave a whoop of delight, and raising his tomahawk over his head, made at Col. Wells, who now appreciated the worth of a good pair of legs, and began hobbling across the open space at a speed that surprised himself, but which, at the same time, he could not avoid feeling was painfully slow when compared with that of his agile-limbed enemy.

It soon became apparent that Colonel Wells and the Iroquois would reach the fort at about the same moment, the superior speed of the Indian making up for the wide diversity of the distance.

It was death to the fugitive to stop, and it looked very much like it to him, as though it were death to keep on,

but the latter course was the only one that offered the least ray of hope, and so he stuck to it.

The two flying foes converged rapidly. The Iroquois did not care about rushing into the open door of the fort among the women and children, as very probably there might be some strong-minded females there who would be difficult to manage; and, as they came within twenty feet of each other, he drew back his tomahawk with the purpose of burying it in his head; but it was hardly poised and the aim made, when the rifle in the hands of Mary Wells was discharged, and with an ear-splitting screech the Iroquois sprang high in air, and fell headlong to the earth.

The next moment the panting, gasping Colonel Wells fell forward into the arms opened to receive him, and the strong door was closed and barred behind him.

Now that the commander was safe the interest was transferred to old Josiah Bowles, who could be seen leisurely galloping up the road, all unmindful of the exciting scene that had just taken place at the fort.

The two redskins, upon discovering the ruse of the fugitive, had halted, and stood watching the race with an eagerness scarcely less than that of the spectators within the fort. Its unexpected termination left them no alternative, but to make themselves as scarce as possible in that vicinity, and to attempt to retrieve their reputation by turning their attention to the horseman.

"What be them varmints after?" demanded Mrs. Bowles, who, as may well be imagined, was deeply interested in the scene.

"I suppose they are going to pay Josiah a visit."

"What! be they after my old man?"

"I fear they are, but they cannot catch him, as he can run faster than I can, and you see is mounted on his mare."

"Yes' let 'em touch him if they dare!" said she indignantly, "I'll wring every one of their necks."

U—oo—gh! I only wish I had 'em here this minute. I'd teach 'em manners!" and she shook her clenched hand in a manner that showed how earnest she was in uttering the words.

But the matter was now becoming serious. Old Mr. Bowles had reined his mare down to a walk, and was proceeding along very cautiously, looking only in front of him, for the first evidence of the danger, while the two redskins were running rapidly and silently along the road, nearing him with almost the same rapidity that their comrade had overhauled Colonel Wells in his run for life.

If nothing should occur to apprise the old man of this insidious danger in the rear, it could not fail to be fatal. It became all-important, therefore, that he should be apprised immediately; and while Colonel Wells was meditating upon the best method of doing this, Mrs. Bowles proved herself equal to the occasion, and cut the Gordian knot.

Running to the upper part of the building, she thrust her head through the trap-door, and shouted:

"Josiah! Josiah! LOOK OUT FOR THE VARMINTS BEHIND YER!"

That voice would have to be heard for any one to appreciate it. Perhaps its penetrating power, in the case of the horseman, was owing to his familiarity with it; for, as it went skurrying through the air, he turned his head, looked a moment, comprehended his peril, and the next instant, the switch-tailed mare shot like a thunderbolt up the road, quickly carrying its rider, at least, from all danger in the rear.

## CHAPTER X.

## A THRILLING SCENE.

At this critical juncture, when the nerves of the little garrison were wrought up to the highest pitch, a piercing scream from Mrs. Bowles announced the discovery of some new and fearful danger.

"What is the matter?" inquired several, turning their heads towards her, when she gasped out:

"Samuel Thomas is missing! he is gone!"

"Perhaps he is somewhere in the building, and you have not noticed him during the hurry," returned Colonel Wells in his mild soothing manner.

"No, I know he isn't."

"And how do you know that he is not?" inquired the Colonel, showing a little vexation that this new perplexity should come upon him, at this absorbing moment.

"BECAUSE I SEEN HIM JUST NOW."

"Where?"

"Out among them trees; he is in the top of one of them and waved his hand at me just now."

Colonel Wells coolly produced a pocket telescope, and asked for more explicit directions of the spot where the youngster had been seen.

"Yonder in that big tree—the boys is allers climbing it, and I have forbid him so often—I'll give him the biggest trouncing of his life when he comes home."

"He may never come home," ventured Mary Wells in the hope of checking the volubility of Mrs. Bowles, but the latter instantly gave utterance to a series of terrific shrieks which would have done credit to an Iroquois Indian. Colonel Wells commanded her rather

sharply to hold her peace, and then directed his telescope towards the tree indicated.

The latter was one of those giant spreading oaks, which are occasionally found in the forest and which look as if they had attained their growth about the time the surrounding trees had begun growing. It being very large and particularly dangerous to climb, as a matter of course it was a favorite resort for the young urchins of Wellsburg.

As Colonel Wells carefully scrutinized the tree, he detected on one of the uppermost limbs the form of a boy, who, it was natural to suppose was the veritable Samuel Thomas, who had caused his mother such great concern. He sat astride of the limb, swinging his hat, as if seeking to attract the attention of those within the fort. Whether he was standing or not could not be determined, as the distance was too great, but the probabilities were that he was using his lungs to the best of his ability.

"He'll be killed! he'll be killed!" wailed Mrs. Bowles, wringing her hands in grief, "and then what will his poor dear father say when he comes back from fighting under General Washington?"

"Will you try and restrain your grief," sternly demanded Colonel Wells. "You have excuse for your fears, but not for endangering our safety thereby."

"How am I hurting you?" she demanded rather spitefully.

"We are expecting the appearance of the Indian's every minute over the hills, and if our attention is distracted in this manner, they will make us all prisoners before we know it."

"Yes; and they will come right by where my darling boy is in the tree. O dear! O dear!"

Such unfortunately was the case. The oak stood but a few rods from the hill over which the Iroquois were momentarily expected to come, and it followed that nothing but the worst consequences could result.

Samuel Thomas was about ten years of age, quite

bright for one of his years; and, as his grandmother expressed it, "knowed a blamed sight more than his grandfather." It was the common opinion that if he could be apprised of his danger, he might escape.

Keen-eyed and sharp-witted as the American Indians proverbially are, it was hardly to be expected, while marching against the settlement, they would search the tree-tops for prey. The shrubbery upon the oak being quite luxuriant, all he had to do was to lie flat on the limb, keep still and watch the fight.

In case the boy had not expected danger, no one could think of any means by which to warn him. Any signal made from the house would probably be accepted as a sign of encouragement, for the daring act of climbing the oak to a greater height than he had ever done before, while, as has been intimated, the distance was too great for the voice to be sent with any assurance that its mission could be understood.

"I don't see as anything can be done," said Colonel Wells, as he lowered his telescope, and placed it on a stand beside him.

"Can anybody run out and tell him? I'll do it if you say so."

The answer was a decided shake of the head.

"I say do no such thing. It would be the destruction of yourself and the boy, and would endanger the safety of us all!"

"I don't see how it would do that," was the somewhat ill-matured response of the old lady.

"We either shall have to shut you out, or keep the door unbarred for you. In the first case, you would be quickly gobbled up, and in the second the probabilities would be that you would bring a hundred yelling Mohawks at your heels to come in with you."

"I don't see any Injins nor anybody else."

"No; but they are near us, and will appear in a very few minutes. I have hopes the boy will discover his danger in time to take care of himself."

"Oh! this is Josiah's fault!" exclaimed Mrs. Bowles

with a new burst of anger." "I remember distinctly that I asked him where Samuel Thomas was and he said he seen him plain, and picked him up and chuck-ed him into the second story window. O the wicked man! to tell such a falsehood! Won't I give it to him when I see him."

And she compressed her lips and shook her head in a way which signified her earnestness in the matter.

"Restrain your indignation," mildly suggested Mary Wells, who was vexed at this unseemly exhibition of temper, when it was not known whether her husband would ever return to her again or not; but her long acquaintance with Mrs. Bowles should have taught her the futility of attempting to impose any check upon her tongue.

"I guess you'd be indignant too, if you had a son of yours up in that tree, and the Injins comin' after him. Gracious, gal! what are you blushing about so? You may be thankful if ever you have as good a boy as that, and I hope he won't have such a blamed old fool for a grandaddy as that precious sweet little deer has."

"I hope not," mildly remarked Colonel Wells, who still failing to see anything of his dreaded enemies coming over the hills, thought he had time for a word or two with the strong-minded woman at his side.

Mary could not avoid her crimson blushes; for, like every young lady who had a lover, she suspected that all knew her secret and were thinking about it.

"My gracious! I didn't think you would be the granddaddy!" exclaimed Mrs. Bowles, somewhat blushed. "But, O Mr. Wells, can't there be anything done for that poor sweet lamb up in the tree? Must he stay there till the Indians come along and kill him?"

"As I remarked a moment ago, Samuel is quite a sharp little fellow for one so young."

"Yes, he's got the brains of the whole Bowles' family," interrupted the delighted grandmother.

"Very probably, and yet he is not particularly over-stocked."

"Oh! no, not at all," was the remark of the old lady, all unconscious of the left handed compliment then paid her.

"From his elevated position, he will be likely to spy the Mohawks long before we do, and he may descend and reach the fort in time for us to admit him."

"Oh! I do hope so."

"We can all join in that wish, and none more fervently than myself. Nothing would grieve me more than to see your grandson a prisoner among the Indians."

He purposely avoided saying "killed," out of respect for her feelings, although he felt that that would be the most fitting word.

"He seems excited about something," remarked Mary Wells, who had taken the telescope of her father, and was scrutinizing the lad through the small upper window. "See how he waves his hat, and I think he is shouting something."

"If you will maintain absolute silence perhaps we may be able to catch his words," remarked Colonel Wells. "I have no doubt, whatever he says, concerns us."

It was easy enough for the older persons to keep quiet, but not so the younger; they were nervous and excited as urchins are apt to be, and it required no little "Sh'ing" before anything approaching silence could be obtained. Finally at the very moment when all was still, a terrific crash was heard in the edifice, and Mrs. Bowles darted down stairs with the exclamation. "That's George Augustus! I'll give it to him!"

The next instant a very tremendous crash was heard; followed by a terrible crashing and yelling, and then a sudden shutting off of the tumult and the voice of Mrs. Bowles.

"Now listen Colonel Wells, as hard as you want. I've got my hand over his mouth and am holding his head over the churn, which he had just upset. Listen quick, for it is all I can do to hold his mouth and legs still. George Augustus is getting very strong."

Colonel Wells leaned his head far out the window, and strained his hearing to its utmost. He could just hear the voice of the boy but could not identify his words, but he perceived he could make out the portentous word Indians.

At this critical juncture, while all were watching and listening with an intentness which cannot be described, the stillness was broken by the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by the instant thud of the bullet, as it buried itself in a rafter overhead, passing within an inch of Colonel Wells' forehead.

The heads instantly disappeared, the window was closed, and all took themselves to the port-holes, where no such danger could be encountered. Mary Wells had given a slight scream, thinking her father struck, but his assurance that he was unharmed was quickly given to the relief of all.

That this well-nigh fatal shot had been fired by an Indian, no one doubted; but where he was concealed it was impossible to tell. Judging from its course after entering the window, Colonel Wells believed it came from a clump of bushes lying off from the main road, where at least one redskin must have concealed himself and was keeping a close surveillance upon the fort.

This shot in one sense was a fortunate one; for Colonel Wells' feelings had become wrought upon by the perilous position of the boy, that he had about concluded to unbar the door and allow Mrs. Bowles to go forth to warn him of the danger; had he done so, the recent event proved that she would have assuredly lost her life, and not benefit'd him in the least. The gun had been probably fired by the survivor of those who had come so near proving his own destruction,

and who instead of going back to his people with the main war party, was still lingering on the outskirts of the clearing, in the hope of obtaining some means of revenging himself.

This for the time distracted the attention from the boy in the tree, but when Colonel Wells had a moment to collect his thoughts, a new idea occurred, which greatly changed his opinion of the boy. There was no longer any doubt but that he was fully aware of his own danger; that from his elevated perch he had seen the Indians advancing, and that his excited motions and shouts were intended to apprise his friends in the fort of the fact.

If there had been any doubt upon this point it was removed a few moments later, when the officer looked from the port-hole, and descried the youngster going down the tree with all the celerity possible. He was seen to clasp round the limb and slide down it, as rapidly as a ball would have rolled; then reaching the immense trunk, he sprang from limb to limb, until within a dozen feet of the ground, when he dropped as lightly as a monkey to the earth, and instantly started at full speed toward the south, opposite the hills.

"Why doesn't he come this way?" asked Mrs. Bowles, who had again ascended the upper story, and was peering through one of the loop-holes. "Why doesn't he run for the house?"

"Because he has too much sense for that," replied Colonel Wells; "he knows it would be sure death. He is taking the wisest course. God assist him!"

The eyes which were so intently watching the boy, as he ran rapidly over the ground, now saw an Indian spring up apparently from the very earth and start in pursuit.

"Shoot him! shoot him!" was the involuntary exclamation of the now doubly-excited listeners.

"The distance is too far," he replied, but while he was speaking, he thrust his rifle through the loop-hole,

and sighted at the painted Indian, running so rapidly across his field of vision. The next instant the sharp whip-like crack broke upon the air, and all eyes were strained.

"You missed him!" gasped several.

"No, you didn't; see, he is hit."

"He is limping."

"He will fall."

"No, he is only hurt a little."

Beyond question the redskin was struck, as he could be seen limping painfully along, as he persevered in his race. One of the old gentlemen who had the reputation of possessing extraordinary eyesight, declared that he saw the ball hit him—that is, he saw the evidence of it. A sudden slight spring upward, and the involuntary throwing of the arms were his proof.

But however this might be there remained the lamentable fact that the Iroquois had not been disqualified from continuing his pursuit, and in anguish of spirit Mrs. Bowles now called upon several others to fire at the savage before it was too late.

A couple of the old men heeded her, and did their best, but the miscreant was too far off, and all knew that he was safe from harm.

Meantime the chase had become fearfully exciting. The boy had aimed for a corner of the wood about a hundred yards distant, and seemed to be running with the feeling that if he could reach this he was safe.

He was fleet of foot, but of course could not compare with the redskin, who, no doubt, had practised a score of years more than the youngster; but with the advantage of the wound inflicted, a slight ray of hope dawned upon the boy, and fully sensible of it, he worked as a little fellow never did.

"Run, Samuel! Run, Samuel!" shouted Mrs. Bowles, unable to restrain her feelings. "Come this way and we'll pepper the sarpint."

"It was the hope of Colonel Wells that the lad would take such a course as to bring his pursuer within range of their guns, although he feared this would only complicate matters, as, in case the Indian was shot, no doubt the boy would have been riddled by a dozen of his enemy's friends. But the youngster kept straight ahead, and had passed two-thirds of the distance, with a prospect of reaching the wood, when a sad and unforeseen accident occurred.

At this juncture, Mary Wells, who was intently watching every movement with the telescope, saw the boy turn his head and glance over his shoulder at his pursuer. As he did so he caught his foot and stumbled headlong. When he arose the Indian was upon him, and had him by the arm.

Mrs. Bowles turned her head unable to see the child killed, and Mary Wells dropped the telescope at her feet and covered her face with her hands, while a wail went up from all within.

"He is killed! He is killed!"

But Colonel Wells, who had never once removed his eyes, now made the gratifying announcement.

"He is not killed; he is a prisoner; the Indian is leading him away!"

Little time was given the garrison to rejoice, for almost at the same instant one of them called out that the Indians were coming from the woods.

## CHAPTER XI.

## A SUMMONS.

At this point it is proper that we should give some idea of the strength of the party gathered in the fort,

In the absence of old Josiah Bowles, there were but four men, all three of whom were older and feebler than the Colonel. Although counting as the effective force of the garrison, they did not amount to much, as they had lost in a great measure their skill in aiming and firing, and their strength and activity were not equal to the sudden emergencies which are always sure to rise on such occasions.

There were ten boys, ranging from ten to fifteen years. Some of these were quite expert with the rifle, and formed the mainstay of the garrison. Several of the women were also skilled in the handling of the weapon, Colonel Wells' own daughter having proved her dexterity. Mrs. Bowles was the only strong-minded female in the party. A dozen like her no doubt, would have been a valuable acquisition, could they have been kept under control.

While all the party were looking for the Indians to come over the hills, where old Mr. Bowles had first perceived them, they made their appearance in the edge of the wood, where they halted, as if to consult together. In the meantime our friends were watching them with the most intense interest.

In the course of ten minutes, a file of Indians marched out to view in close order, and made a circuit of fifty feet, then turned and went into the woods. They kept coming out from among the trees and going in again, until Bowles called out:

"Heavens o'nath! how many are there? I have counted five hundred already."

Colonel Wells smiled.

"You have counted them over eight or ten times."

Their looks showed that they did not understand him.

"I have seen that trick played before. Those Indians make a circle that pass around in the woods and then come out again. When you see them do that, it is a sure sign of weakness."

"They're a pert set of scamps," was the comment of Bowles upon this performance.

The Iroquois, doubtless, judging that they had given a suitable impression of their numbers and strength, now took their station along the trees again, where they could be detected talking with each other, gestulating, pointing toward the fort, and walking back and forth, in a manner that showed they had very little fear of those in the fort.

Finally, Colonel Wells, who was peering through a loop-hole, saw one of the Indians walk out into open view; and, holding a bow in his hand, draw the string back until the arrow-head touched his other hand. The next instant the arrow rose in a swift, beautiful parabola, and with a dull thud, was heard to strike up on the roof above their heads.

"What a set of fools!" exclaimed Mrs. Bowles, who had witnessed the performance from her loop-hole, and did not understand its significance. "What do they want to shoot bows and arrows when they've got guns? But I s'pose they want to save their ammunition."

As the missile came sailing through the air, Colonel Wells fancied he detected something beside the usual feathery appendage, and he now hastened above and carefully opened the trap-door. There, within arm's reach, stuck, the arrow, and to the reed dangled a tiny bit of paper.

It required but a moment to withdraw the arrow

from the wood and detach the piece of paper which was open, and read :

"Colonel Wells is hereby summoned to surrender at once, and unconditionally, under pain of being given over to the Iroquois, under my command. The Iroquois, as Colonel Wells must be aware, number over five hundred, and a prolonged resistance will so exasperate them, as to place them beyond my control. I trust I may therefore hope, for the sake of humanity, there will be no delay in complying with this demand."

### A. GASPARD, COLONEL.

Colonel Wells held the paper and examined and re-read it several times. The handwriting was very handsome, and it seemed as if written with a small piece of red chalk. It looked somewhat familiar, but he did not recollect ever to have heard of the writer's name. It was a source of pleasure, however, to know that he was dealing with one of his own race.

The officer did not hesitate in making his reply, it was :

"Colonel Gaspard is informed that his summons to surrender has been received and duly considered. Colonel Wells cannot understand what cause there is for this peaceable settlement to be attacked by a band of Mohawk Indians, under the leadership of a man of education and refinement. Surprising as is the fact, we have not been forgetful that it might occur, and we are not unprepared. Colonel Wells does not choose to boast ; but if Colonel Gaspard doubts our ability to defend our hearthstones, he is invited to test the matter ; and, if he chooses so to do, he may march his Iroquois in and out the woods again, under the delusion that he cannot be detected, if each of them attempts to pass himself off for a half dozen of his people. Colonel Gaspard is informed further that no similar summons will be considered for a moment."

### C. WELLS, COLONEL COMMANDING.

As there were no means of sending this back to the Woods, Colonel Wells fastened it to a small stone that happened to be in the house, and flung it as far out in front of the fort as possible. It struck a hundred feet from the building, and almost immediately an Indian advanced, picked it up and carried it back to the woods, where "Colonel Gaspard," whoever he was, no doubt, digested its contents fully.

Colonel Wells was watching from his elevated position, the effect of this reply, when his bright-eyed daughter touched his elbow.

"What is it, sis?"

"There is some one making signs to us from behind the fort."

"You are keeping a bright look out there?"

"Yes; but I think this is Mr. Bowles. He seems anxious to attract the attention of some one."

"Well, do you keep a sharp eye upon these red fellows over there by the wood, while I try and make out what it all means. If you see anything unusual, call me at once."

The daughter promised obedience, and Colonel Wells passed over to the other side of the fort, and looked through the loop-hole. Behind a stump, about a hundred yards distance, he saw a crouching form, which required but a second glance to identify as belonging to old Josiah Bowles. There was no intervening buildings nor shelter, so that he was fearful of approaching higher, until he could learn whether those within the building were apprised of his approach or not.

It so happened that there was not a single opening in the lower part of the fort, except the loop-holes pierced for defensive purposes. The single upper window was too high to be reached, without assistance. Colonel Wells was reflecting upon the best method of communicating with his friend, when, as before the gentle wife of the gentleman himself came to his relief.

Placing her mouth to one of the loop-holes, she called out in a suppressed scream.

"*You old fool, go round to the front, and we'll let you in!*"

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## CHAPTER XII.

### ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM THE WOODS.

The Iroquois as yet had made no attempt to surround the building. No doubt they deemed it unnecessary, as it was reasonable to suppose that any of the settlers were on the outside.

It therefore only remained for Mr. Bowles to be expeditious, and there was little fear but what he could effect an entrance into the fort without molestation from the redskins.

Upon hearing the voice of his spouse, he immediately straightened up, as if it had infused new life into him and began advancing toward the house. He was aware of the point where the Indians were congregated, and as may be supposed, he took good care to keep the building between him and them.

At the same time Colonel Wells and Mrs. Bowles descended to the lower floor to let him in, while a third person remained at the loop-hole, to notify all when the proper moment was at hand to remove the fastenings.

"He is coming round the building," came from above.

The next moment the door was drawn carefully inward, and the slim body of old Mr. Bowles glided within.

"Shut the door quick!" he called, throwing his weight against it and forcing it to.

"Heavens o'vath, you've got my fingers fast," screeched Mrs. Bowles.

To relieve the unfortunate lady necessitated another delay, during which, amid her loud wailings, Colonel Wells was sensible that his daughter was calling something from above.

The door was hardly secured when there came a shock against it, that fairly shook the building.

"Now you that have guns, shoot every Indian you can see!" called out Colonel Wells as he ran above.

Running to the loop-holes, which commanded the lower part of the house, (the second story projecting over the first, after the manner of early block-houses,) he thrust his gun through and fired. Then came the yeiling miscreants. His daughter did the same almost simultaneously while, ere the assailants could comprehend whether the shot's had come, two of the aged men repeated the action.

This effectively scattered the redskins, they retreating nearly as rapidly as they advanced, and bearing their dead and wounded with them, including a man who had fought in the front rank with Colonel Wells.

"I am glad they have run away," said Mary, as she began re-loading her gun. "It is a dread sight to see him stretched out there."

"No doubt, but hardly as dreadful as the sight of your father; and had it not been for you, we two would have changed places," said the parent, looking with fond eyes upon his child and his wife, who stood with gun in hand ready to do her duty.

"I believe we're all 'yer," called out Mr. Bowles, as he came toiling up stairs. "I'd been up before but I've been counting over my children and grandchildren and couldn't make but twelve, but one found t'other in the maple syrup down cellar."

The Colonel had glanced through the loop-hole, and saw that the Iroquois had withdrawn to the cover of the wood. He turned to the old man,

"I haven't had time to congratulate you, and I wish you safe return. I was quite anxious about you."

"Aht! but you see I was on the back of the saitch-tailed mare, and if she can't outran a long-legged Mohawk any day, I'll eat her."

"What have you done with her?"

"I run her down into the thicket back of the hill, where she'll stay till she starves it. I don't go after her."

"Or some Indian doesn't find her?"

The old man shook his head.

"It would be a bad find for them; for the way she'd use them teeth and heels of her'n, would make 'em glad enough to let her alone."

"I suppose you were unable to learn anything new about the redskins?"

"Yes, I didn't see nothin' of 'em till I got nearly home when I cотched sight of 'em in the woods, and you seen for yourself how I had to sneak round to get in."

"Of course."

"But, Colonel," said the old man brightening up, "I had a real queer adventure, something about it I don't exactly understand."

"Let's hear and be quick, for we musn't keep our eyes off those gentlemen outside."

"Why, after I'd hitched my mare to a tree in the thicket, and had come out and was stealing through the woods, so as to get round behind the house, I happened to look round, and there, not mor'n a hundred feet off stood two big Injins lookin' right straight at me, never saying a word nor offering to touch me."

"Wal, you'd better say I fel' a little shaky about then. I stared at them a minute, and just so true as you stand there, I seen one of 'em grin almost round to his ears. I didn't wait any longer, but started off as fast as I could tear; when one of 'em yelled out, 'Don't be scart, Josiah! hold on!' He said somethin' else but I couldn't understand, and I d' hit a

him to say it over ag'in. Hang me, but I never seen a redskin before that could talk English so well."

"No; that's what beats me; they both had guns, and could have let daylight through me, if they did not choose to run; but I looked back, and the last thing I seen o' em they were standing there grinning and bawling to me."

The experience was certainly rather singular; but Colonel Wells was about to suggest a clue to its meaning, when his daughter called out,

"There's something wrong, father! they are making ready to try some other plan."

In an instant every loop-hole was covered by an eye. The next moment from among the trees shot out an arrow, that made the same high sweep through the air as the other, and was heard to strike and stick with a dull thud upon the roof above.

The messenger which this bore was in the shape of a piece of burning tow, twisted around the barb. It had scarcely struck when it was followed by another and another until it looked as if the Iroquois were celebrating the Fourth of July by means of rockets.

Several of those within expressing concern at the near shape their danger had taken, Colonel Wells said:

"They can't do any harm; every log in the roof is too green to burn, and they may rain down arrows until it is covered, without any danger."

Nevertheless, he deemed it best to ascend to the look-out with a bucket of water, that in case he was too sanguine in his calculations, he might repair his mistake before it was too late.

The first object that caught his eye was an arrow imbedded in the trap-door itself, and having a piece of paper wrapped around it. Disengaging this he drew it within, and with feelings which may well be imagined, read the following:

"To my Friends: Keep a good heart—don't think

of surrendering—less than one hundred Mohawks—I have a friendly Indian with me and hope soon to create a diversion in your favor—your prospect is good—love to all."

"EDWARD SUTHERLAND."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SIEGE.

Colonel Wells read the letter over again very carefully and then glanced around at the roof. It was bristling like a porcupine, but he saw with a satisfaction which cannot be expressed it was fire-proof, although the wisps of tow were burning and crackling in a half dozen places.

Upon the first sign of this coming storm, months before, he had covered every portion of the roof with green saplings, so full of sap that they would have extinguished a blazing furnace, if thrown within. Of course then it was out of the question for them to take fire.

Convinced then that all was right, he descended and joined his friends. Enjoining silence, he stated the manner in which he had received the note and then read it aloud. Handing it to his daughter he asked :

Mary is that a genuine or counterfeit signature?"

The girl blushed to her very temples as she examined the bit of paper.

"Sakes o'massy, how the gal is a blushin'!" called out Mrs. Bowles. "If anybody knows Ed. Sutherland's writin', she orter, any way; for she's got 'noagh of it. I don't keer, he's a likely boy any way, that was aller's good to his mother afore she die'd, and Mary might go further and fare worse."

As Mrs. Bowles uttered these words, in the sharp-

est of tones, poor Mary felt as if she would sink through the floor. She knew that all eyes were upon her, and she held the paper, consequently, much longer than she otherwise would have done, in order that she might have some excuse for not confronting that battery levelled against her.

"Do you think it is his writing?" asked the father, as he reached out his hand for the note.

"Yes, sir!" was all she could find voice to reply, as she handed it back to him.

"I am glad of that, for a friend in the enemy's camp is worth a dozen here."

"That explains your adventure," added Colonel Wells, addressing Mr. Bowles. "That person addressing you by name was Edward Sutherland."

"But he looked like an Injin."

"Of course: he would not dare to appear among them unless he was thoroughly disguised."

"Well now ain't that queer?" remarked the old man, with a pleased expression. "Who'd ever thought of its being him?"

"Probably no one."

"But he had an Injin with him."

"Yes; he refers to one—a friendly one, who will prove of great advantage to us—Heigho!"

This exclamation was caused by the crack of a rifle on the outside, and the whiz of a bullet, which entered one of the port holes, and passed within a hair's breadth of Colonel Wells' face.

"Look out, my friends," said he, "some of those Indians shoot with remarkable skill, and we shall be hit if we are not careful."

Upon looking out, it was seen that the shower of burning arrows had ceased, probably because the red-skins saw their impotence; but, they had opened a rattling fire upon the buildings, no doubt aiming at the loop-holes, in the hope of striking some of those within.

The flashes of the guns could be plainly detected as

they fired from among the trees, and every bullet either entered within the building itself or was buried in the massive logs.

"I think Josiah, they should not do all the shooting," remarked Colonel Wells, as he examined the priming of his gun, and prepared to return the fire.

"So do I," was the reply of the old man as he imitated his actions. Several others, including one or two of his females, did the same, when before they could make their aim, Mary who was watching keenly all that was going on called out:

"Wait a moment, father; one of them is making a signal to us."

The Colonel looked out and saw an Indian in his war-paint, waving and swinging his hand toward them. It required but a moment to understand what he meant.

"That signal," remarked the Colonel, "is intended as a tantalizing gesture. I can soon answer him."

The eye which ran rapidly along the rifle barrel was true, and when the trigger was pulled, the defiant Iroquois, with a screech, sprang high in the air, and fell lifeless.

The others now began firing, as fast as they could load and aim, at the miscreants who were driven to cover and compelled to be more cautious in their occupations.

"We can hold no parley with them," said Colonel Wells, as he drove the ramrod down his gun barrel. "They are all—our lives, and the best thing we can do is to take as many of theirs as possible."

At this juncture, Mrs. Wells who was acting as sentinel at the rear of the house, called out that a party of Indians were advancing in that direction. The Colonel ran across the room and looked out.

"Let them come, and do what they can; but I may as well let them know that we have seen them."

Pointing his gun out, he discharged it with good effect among the score, who were stealing cautiously

over the ground which Mr. Bowles had traversed a short time previous. The savages were panic-struck at the startling proof that they were seen, and immediately broke for cover, one of their number limping in such a manner as to show that the bullet had not failed to accomplish, in a measure, the wishes of him who aimed it.

As it was prudent to keep the Indians as far away as possible, Colonel Wells called two or three of his friends to his assistance, and they blazed away at every head that could be seen.

But a new danger developed itself. The assailants finding it impossible to fire the fort, now turned their attention to the houses nearest to it. The smoke issuing from the roof and upper windows told how completely they had succeeded, and a few moments later, it all burst out in a flame.

But Colonel Wells had not seen a military experience of thirty years, to allow so obvious an expected danger to overcome him. In the town of Wellsburg, city lots did not command a very high figure at the time of which we speak, and he had taken particular care that his house should not be constructed in dangerous proximity to that of his neighbors.

Still he watched the progress of the fire with some solicitude, as there was quite a breeze blowing. The logs of his house became very hot, and more than once he felt more alarm than he was willing to acknowledge to those around him.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## MASTER BOWLES.

Having devoted considerable space in another portion of our story to master Samuel Thomas Bowles, grandson of the venerable gentleman, who has figured quite extensively in these pages, and having left him in rather dangerous circumstances, it is but proper that he should receivd somewhat further attention at our hands.

The experience of this boy is a warning to all lads against disobeying the injunctions of those having authority over them. In the face of his grandmother's positive prohibition, he stole away that morning into the woods for a ramble, and ventured fully a mile up the stream, to which reference has been made in another place, before he thought of returning. When he did so, it was past noon, and impelled by visions of his wrathful grandmother, he made all haste until he reached the large oak tree, standing on the edge of the clearing. Here he paused awhile, debating upon the best method of stealing into the house unobserved. Being unable to decide the question, he thought a solution might be reached by climbing into the tree.

He was quickly given an idea of the trouble, by the sight of Colonel Wells flying at the top of his speed with the Mohawks in pursuit.

"Golly nation! there's something the matter," was his conclusion. "I do believe the Indians that we have heard so much about have come. Wonder whether they're after me."

But at this juncture he cast his eye towards the hill, and descried a large number of painted men com-

ing along the edge of the wood and over the road. He comprehended the danger at once, and unmindful of his own safety, clomb to the highest limb, swung his hat and shouted at the top of his voice,

*"Faster the doors and windows! Forty hundred thousand Indians of Ijus is coming hard as they can tar!"*

He continued his frantic demonstration until convinced that he attracted attention, when he turned his head, and for the first time became aware that he had been seen by the Indians, and that one of them was stealing rapidly along in a crouching position toward him.

The manner in which he slid down the limb, was fatal to his pantaloons, and shocking to the nerve of any who could have witnessed the movement.

We have given an account of his flight towards the woods, his fall and his capture by the Indians, from which point, we will follow him until some idea is given of his situation and prospects.

That the Mohawk who was limping from a wound in his leg from Colonel Wells' rifle, did not tomahawk him on the spot, was one of the curious facts which are frequently recorded of this people, and can only be explained in the supposition, that some whim seized the captor to dispose differently of him.

Admonished by the dropping shots from the fort, and by the twanging pain in his limb, that he was not entirely beyond the reach of danger, he hurried away into the wood, hustling and jerking the boy until he screamed out with agony.

"Sut up! me kill!" admonished the savage, brandishing his tomahawk over his head, no doubt anxious to sink it into his brains. Thus warned, the lad suppressed his outcries, although more than once he suffered excruciating pain.

The Mohawk hustled him through the woods, frequently hurling him against the trees, and continually muttering imprecations in broken English, as though

inspired with a demoniac hate against the helpless boy.

The latter had his mind continually full of projects of escape, but young as he was, he was old enough to see that he was powerless to do anything, and he wisely forbore irritating his captor, who, it seemed, could not be one much more enraged than he already was.

As the main war-party advanced over the hill at this juncture, the Indian made all haste to join them, going so rapidly, in spite of his wounded leg, that his prisoner more than once was on the point of dropping from exhaustion.

When the savage arrived among his friends, he soon discovered what a difficult task he had on hand, to assist in the assault upon the fort and retain his prisoner at the same time. He decided, however, that the best thing to do was to put him out of the way without delay.

At this opportune moment, Peqawaski leaped forward, stayed the uplifted arm and said in the Indian tongue:

"Let him alone."

"He is the son of the Yangese."

"He is too young; the rattlesnake has not yet gained his fangs," was the flowery language of the Indian.

"But, if we slay him he will never sting."

"Peqawaski has lost his child: he fell by the hands of the Delawares. Peqiwa-ki will take him for his son."

To this arrangement the other demurred, and claimed the boy by right of capture; but the latter recognized his friend, and running to him, embraced his knees.

"O save me, Peqawaski; that bad man wants to kill me! Save me and I will give you all my playthings. Don't let him hit me with his tomahawk!"

Peqawaski did not intend that the boy should recognize him, as it might interfere with his plan of saving him, as well as with other schemes.

Peqiwaski did not look down at the boy as he clung to him, but confronted his opponent.

"He seeks me, not you."

"But he is mine"

Simultaneously they drew their hunting knives and glared into each other's eyes, with the evil look of pugilists previous to encounter. Peqwaski threw the boy behind him where he would be free from hindering the encounter.

The two would have closed in deadly combat, had it not been for the appearance of Colonel Gaspard, the commanding officer, who had the reputation of possessing an irritable temper.

"What is the meaning of all this?" he demanded in a fury, as he strode forward towards the combatants, forcing them back with his outstretched arms. "Have we not foes enough in front without you two fighting in the rear?"

"Peqiwaski seeks to take from me the young wolf I have captured."

"Metawanket wishes my son who flies from him, and comes to me," replied Peqwaski.

"What have you to do with his son?" asked the Colonel angrily.

"Peqiwaski lies; he wishes to take him from me and make him his own son."

"Where is the youngster?" asked the Colonel, somewhat bewildered at the conflicting testimony.

He turned to make search, when it was found that Master Father Thomas Bowles had taken leg bail.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE MEETING IN THE WOOD.

When the Frenchman and Indians looked about, and saw nothing of the subject of dispute, they stood a few moments as if in doubt what to do.

"One of you hunt him up and hold him until we are over this fight when I will decide the matter."

Inasmuch as Colonel Gaspard did not specify who should fetch back the boy, Metawauket thought he was the one meant and immediately started, and was followed instantly by Peqwaski.

"Stop!" thundered Colonel Gaspard, "I have seen enough of this tomfoolery."

"But my son will escape," said Peqwaski.

"If I had a son who wanted to run away from me, I would let him do so."

"He is a white wolf?" said Metawauket.

"Let him go," said the Colonel; "we shall find him again, and if we don't it will make little difference."

The two Mohawks could do nothing but obey him, which they did with rather a poor grace, as they glanced angrily at each other.

By this time Master Bowles had gone perhaps three hundred yards when he began to look for some suitable tree to climb, when he hit on a large oak.

He paused abruptly in consternation, for there before him stood a person arrayed in all the savage paraphanalia of paint and costume. But as he stood transfixed, gazing on the terrible being before him, it struck him that there was something familiar in that hideously-bedaubed countenance.

"You look frightened," he finally said. "What are you afraid of, Sammy?"

"O El Sutherland is that you! I thought you was another of those dreadful Injins."

"Do I look like one?"

"I should think you do. You have'nt turned Mohawk, have you?"

"Only for a little while to give our friends a lift. But how is it that you are here at this time?"

This was done in a few moments, when our hero proceeded to question the boy regarding his friends.

"So you see Sammy, this all comes from disobeying your grandmother."

"Yes," replied the youngster, "I hadn't oughter done it."

"But I won't scold you, as I have no doubt Mrs. Bowles will do enough of that when this blows over."

"That's so, and a blamed sight more than there's any need of. I wish you'd talk to her and get her off jawin' so much."

"I'm afraid it wouldn't do much good, Sammy. The best thing you can do is to be as obedient as you can to her."

"No use to that; she's bound to jaw. If I's grandfather, I'd wallup her."

"Tat, tut, don't talk in that manner; she is old and rather odd in her ways. Try and be a better boy."

"I'll try," was the cheerful response.

"Now Sammy, it is getting late in the afternoon, and our folks are in rather dangrous quarters."

"Do you think they'll get killed?" interrupted the youngster, with considerable concern.

"I hope not; but you hear the gans; they have to fight, and Pepawaski and I must help them."

"Can't I do something, too?"

"You can do nothing at all and will only be in the way."

"Then I'll stay out of the way."

"Just what I wan't you to do. The woods are full of Indians, and if you stay here, like as not they will come upon you, when I have no doubt they will toma-

hawk you. You have been very fortunate in getting off as you have, and there is no probability of such a thing happening again."

"I was just looking up into the tree, to find a good place to hide, when I seen you and you almost scared the life out of me. Wouldn't it be a good plan for me to go up there?"

"It will, provided you don't go to the top and swing your hat and shout and yell as you did awhile ago, which came so near proving the death of you."

"No fear of my doing that."

"Then up with you, and lose no time about it."

The boy ascended the tree as nimble as a monkey, and when sately perched among the branches, was totally invisible from below.

"Be careful and remain there," called out Sutherland, as he moved away.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### AN ARRIVAL.

We left Colonel Wells somewhat anxiously watching the power of the flames, of the adjoining building. A few minutes' scrutiny convinced him that there was no danger from this source, and he drew a great sigh of relief.

Fire has always been a powerful and dreadfully of the Indians in making his attack upon the white settlement, and many a stoutly contested battle has been decided in this manner, where nothing else could prove of avail.

Returning to his post above, Colonel Wells instructed all those who had rifles to shoot whenever they caught a glimpse of an Indian, for their safety man-

festly depend upon their crippling the power of the assailants all they could.

The contest now assumed a new phase. Every few seconds, there would be the sharp crack of a gun from one of the loop-holes, responded to by a flash and report from the woods. Occasionally a bullet whizzed into one of the crevices and buried itself in the wall behind. Several narrow escapes occurred, but providentially no one was hurt. When an eye looked out, it generally squinted along the rifle barrel, which so filled up the orifice, that it was certainly an extraordinary chance return shot that could make their positions dangerous. When re-loading, they were careful to screen their bodies, so that, if a ball did enter, it could not injure them.

While Colonel Wells stood in the look-out, peering cautiously around him, the familiar thud told him that something had struck directly behind him. A glance showed that the very thing he was expecting was there; but as he read, his heart sank:

"Dear Friends: Matters begin to look bad. The Mohawks, who are commanded by a renegade Frenchman, have been reinforced by over a hundred Iroquois. From signs that I see, I think the critical moment will come about midnight, when they intend to overwhelm you. Stand firm, and don't sleep a wink. We shall attempt our diversion just before midnight. I am cheered by one thing—my Indian friend has found several other good fellows among the new arrivals, so we shall have quite a respectable party, but still not enough. If you hear an Indian give three faint knocks at your door, after it is fairly dark, let him in at once. He will want two or three men, and a number of miles to come back with him. If you can possibly spare them do so, for with them I am almost sure our plan will succeed. Master Bowles is safe. I have had him in the woods, where he can easily be found when this matter is settled. E. S."

This contained important information surely, and the last sentence especially sent a thrill of joy through every heart. Mrs. Bowles gave a slight shriek of joy, but other important business claimed their attention.

Owing to the gathering darkness, the firing between the two hostile parties now ceased entirely; and, confident that all danger had abated for a few hours, Colonel Wells advised the females to prepare supper, and to stow their children away for the night.

This was speedily done. No doubt, the surrounding circumstances made the blessing invoked take the form of an earnest invocation to the Great Being, in which all responded fully and earnestly.

A point in favor of the besieged was now observed. There was quite a bright moon in the sky, sufficient to make the dark line of woods visible, and reveal the approach of a single Indian, no matter how insidiously he advanced. This would enable the garrison to make their aim good, and prevent the consummation of those artful schemes, which are always sure to take shape in the brains of the copper-colored dogs on such occasions.

Colonel Wells placed his sentinels two in number, at the sides of the building with orders to shoot everything they saw move, no matter whether it resembled a pig, dog, log, or bush. These artifices were so common that he was emphatic upon the point.

He made one exception, however. He told them if they saw a savage advance straight toward them, making a signal with his hand, they should restrain their fire, as there was good reason to believe that the friendly Indian whom they were expecting would reveal himself in this manner.

Colonel Wells took his own position in the rear of the house, for he was pretty positive their visitor would make his appearance at that point, so as to escape the observation of the hostile Mohawks.

He had been in his position scarcely a half hour,

when old Mr. Bowles uttered an exclamation, and discharged his gun at the same instant.

"What now?" asked Colonel Wells, turning his head but not changing his position.

"I sp'iled a devilish contrivance that time!" he answered, proceeding to reload his gun by the dim light in his room.

"What shape did it take?"

"One of them grunters--great big, slab-sided hog, poking his nose along the ground, and walking as though he had to hitch up his breeches at every step he took."

"That's right: knock over all such that you see."

Colonel Wells concluded that that portion of the fort was as safe as it could be under present circumstances, and therefore devoted himself to his own duties.

Looking across the open space in the rear of the house, he saw a tall figure come out from the woods, and run lightly toward him. Convinced that it was his friend, he descended to the lower floor, undid all the fastenings except one, and then placed his ear so as to listen.

First a faint footfall, then three rapid knocks, distinct and unmistakable. The door was quickly pulled open, and the next moment an Indian glided inside, and helped to secure the door behind him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"Well, my good friend, what do you want?" inquired Colonel Wells, as soon as he had the Indian secured inside.

The savage replied by handing a note to his interrogator, who, as he expected, found it was from young Sutherland. It simply reiterated the fact that the Iroquois were largely reinforced, and that the critical moment was to come toward midnight. It added that the success of the scheme depended upon Colonel Wells sending back three men with the Indian, who, it was stated could be implicitly trusted.

But now arose a difficulty: how were these three men to effect their egress? If they passed out in front, they would be sure to attract the notice of the vigilant Indians in the wood, who, it could not be supposed, would allow the log fort to remain a moment unwatched. It was hardly probable that they would scrutinize every portion of it narrowly and continually, for as the building was manifestly the safest place for them to remain, they could not see any cause for their forsaking its shelter at this critical moment.

Colonel Wells called old Mr. Bowles and his boy below, and stated what was necessary to do and asked their advice as to how it should be done.

"Who are the three?" asked the old gentleman.

"You and your son and myself."

"But how about leaving these folks —"

"It is best, I think; the only question is, how are we to get out without being seen."

"The Injins ain't watchin' the back part of the house?"

"They don't seem to be."

"Wal, it's easy 'nough then—just drop out the upper wiudow."

"What a dunce that I didn't think of that before. Of course."

"You want our guns I s'pose."

"Certainly; let's go above, and let them know what we propose to do, and not wait any longer."

Colonel Wells explained his intentions to his friends, instructing them to keep up an unremitting watch and to fire at the least manifestation that came from the direction of the wood. He said if their party returned before morning, they would be preceded by himself, who would walk straight out from the wood, which stretched several hundred yards from the rear portion of the house. An unremitting watch and fire, would prevent the Iroquois from suspecting that the force had been weakened, and would help to make the diversion proposed by Sutherland more complete. He added that probably the Indians would unite in an attack before midnight, when the struggle for life would assuredly take place. Leaving his daughter and wife as commanders in his absence, he embraced them, bade them an affectionate good-bye, and the party took their departure.

The window was carefully opened, and was found of just sufficient width to allow the passage of a sing'e person. The Indian went out feet first, dropping as lightly as a feather upon the soft earth below. He was followed by Colonel Wells, then old Mr. Bowles, and last, his son, who proved himself as agile as a cat, and a most valuable member of the party. His daughter, leaned forward a moment, and called good-bye, again.

"Good-bye! and may God bless you. There is more courage and wisdom in your head, than all the rest I leave behind me, excepting your mother."

The Indian gave a grunt, which being all the English he could master, was understood as signifying

that they should follow him. All three did so, running lightly and silently, until they were beneath the friendly shelter of the wood. Here they had scarcely paused, when out of the gloom came a form, which Colonel Wells, in spite of its repulsive disguise, recognized as Edward Sutherland.

"Hardly expected to meet you, Colonel," was uttered in a frank, manly tone,

"I had no one to send, whom I was willing to trust: you see we are rather short of men."

"I suppose so; has there been any one hit inside?"

"Not one."

"Glad to hear it—all well?"

"I believe so."

"Yis, yis," added old Mr. Bowles impatiently, "the gal is fust rate, and blushed all over when the Colonel handed your letter for her to read."

If young Sutherland's face had not been pretty thickly covered with paint, and himself shrouded in the gloom of the wood, it would have been seen that he was blushing deeply, but he made no answer to the plain words of the old man.

"You spoke of a scheme, by which you hoped to create a diversion in our favor?" remarked Colonel Wells in an interrogative manner.

"Yes; I will explain it in a few words."

"Don't speak too loud—don't speak too loud," admonished the old gentleman. "The way you yelled at me yesterday, shows you know how to speak out."

"My plan in brief is this: My friend Pequawaski, and his friends, numbering three besides myself, have been engaged in spreading a rumor through the camp, that a party of Yangtze—as they call the Yankees—and a band of friendly Oneidas are close at hand, and liable to appear at any moment.

It has almost created a panic, and we propose to take advantage of this feeling, and so frighten them as to make them clear out entirely."

"In what manner?"

"We have a keg of powder concealed in a pile of stones, directly in the center of the camp, and which is now burning with a slow match. It won't go off under an hour, but when it does it will make the tallest kind of a time. The explosion, which will be very fatal to those around it will be the signal for these Indians to raise the shout that the Yengese are coming, while we are to crack away at the same time with our guns: and I have little doubt, but what we can make the ruse completely successful and save your families. What do you think of it, Colonel Wells?"

"It strikes me as a good plan, and offering more hope than any we could possibly adopt."

"Follow me then as carefully as possible."

The young man led the way through the woods for some distance, until they reached a sort of hollow, when he paused.

"We are now a couple hundred yards away from where the Indians are. I will let Peqwarki here pass into camp, where he and his friends will do all they can to prepare the Iroquois for a panic, in the way of frightening them about rumors of the coming Yengese and friendly Oneidas."

Sutherland muttered something to the Indian, who immediately withdrew, and disappeared in the darkness.

"He and his comrades will do good service," remarked young Sutherland.

"But will they not overdo it and awaken the suspicion of the Mohawks?"

"They are too cunning for that; they know how to operate among their own people."

"Let me ask, Edward, how it is that you happen in this neighborhood at this opportune moment?"

"I have a furlough from the army for a month, and was on my way here, when I met Peqwaski hunting in the woods. He told me that a party of Mohawks were descending the river, and he thought would very probably go into Cherry Valley, and pay Wellsburg a

visit. You may not have recognized Peqwaski, but he is a warm friend of yours, from the many kindnesses he has received at your hands, and he is the same red-skin I used to hunt with before the war.

"Well, he felt very bad over it, and we two tried to think of some plan to help, and finally concluded to fix me up as an Indian, and we two would go among them, and raise all the mischief we could. I have been with Peqwaski so long, that I can speak Mohawk like a native, and I had no fear."

"We mingled right among them, and did not attract the least suspicion, and have got along so far."

"How did you manage with the keg of powder?"

"That is all the Indian's sharpness; It belongs to the Mohawks, but he managed, by some means or other, to get hold of it, and put it down among the stones, which you know are quite a big pile, as they have been collecting three or four years, from what we gathered around the village. After he buried it there, he contrived to get a slow match to it."

"Everything is working finely. The Mohawks, for all they are in such large numbers, are very uneasy and apprehensive. Some of them, too, know of you by reputation, and do not like the idea of injuring one who has always been a good friend to them."

"That pleases me," said Colonel Wells, "I cannot understand why this attack is made, when I have been on such terms with the Five Nations."

"It was the doings of that Gaspard, and a few dusky dogs. You don't know this Gaspard?"

"Never heard of him."

"He seems to have a particular enmity against you, from what cause I cannot tell—"

"Is his given name Albert?"

"It is,"

"Ah! I have it! I understand it all. His right name is Rochambeau—Albert Raspard Rochambeau?"

"I have heard the latter name also applied to him."

"Is he thin, tall, with black hair and eyes?"

"He corresponds exactly with that, except his hair is considerably gray."

"It is an affair of twenty-five years' standing. I married the lady he loved—that is all, except we had one or two collisions during the French and English war."

At this point Peqwaski spoke to Sutherland, whereupon the latter quickly said :

"See that your guns are ready; the time is close at hand."

"We are to rush, shoot and yell like blazes!" inquired old Mr. Bowles.

"Yes, and make all the noise—"

A terrific booming explosion burst upon the air, followed immediately by screams, and shouts, and yells, that told plainly enough the mine had exploded.

"Now!" called Sutherland.

"The Yangese are coming! the Yangese are coming!"

Accompanied by shouts, whoops, and the firing of guns, and the most discordant screaming. Peqwaski and the Onedias were allowed to precede their friends, so as to arrive among the startled Mohawks immediately after the terrifying explosion.

The panic could not have been more complete. Had ten thousand "Yangese," sprung from the fort, with loaded guns, the Mohawks could not have fled more precipitately. Ten minutes later, not a living enemy was within sight, while they were skurrying through the woods in every direction.

The whole affair was understood within the building, and when our friends advanced toward it, the door was unhesitatingly opened, and the joy of all was complete.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## WHICH IS THE LAST.

There yet remained considerable anxiety regarding master Bowles. He was so young that no one felt like reposing much confidence in his ability to take care of himself; although all will admit that he displayed a shrewdness far beyond his years.

If he had remained perched in the tree since entering it, the chances were that he had gone to sleep, fallen to the ground and broken his neck, or been slain by the horde of Molawks rushing through the woods.

"Did you notice whether his trowsers was tore any?" inquired Mrs. Bowles of young Sutherland.

"As they received pretty rough usage, I think it is safe to conclude that they are somewhat disarranged."

"Cause you know they are his Sunday ones. I wove the cloth myself, and if he has tared them, O won't I give it to him!"

"The poor boy has been punished enough already, He has had a hard time, and if you ever get him back again your gratitude ought to drown all other feelings. You may never see him again," said our hero, in the hope of toning down the feelings of the old lady.

"Yes; just like enough, after gittin' away so nice from them, he'll go and get nabbed after all!"

The hours dragged wearily by to our friends. The general supposition was that the boy was asleep, and all hoped that he would come in as soon as it was daylight. Although all were nearly certain that the Indians had gone "for good," yet no one ventured outside the fort during the darkness. Too great a terror

had been inspired by their presence for them to run any unnecessary risk.

Edward Sutherland and Mary Wells managed in spite of the confusion and tumult to obtain a sort of unoccupied corner, where they were at liberty to indulge in those sweet little chats, which are apt to characterize lovers when thrown into each other's society.

Here the hours passed away pleasantly and rapidly, despite the heavy breathing of the sleepers, and the constant tread of others whose fears would not permit them to slumber, and before they had thought of such a thing, they heard the announcement that day had come.

"And has nothing been heard of Sammy?" inquired Sutherland of Colonel Wells.

"Nothing at all; I am beginning to feel anxious about him, I think we had better make a hunt for him."

"In that case we had better go at once. As I hid the boy I will know where to find him."

"And I will accompany you—"

"Let me suggest that some one else go with me,—say Mr. Bowles. The danger may not be over, in which case your presence will be of more importance here than anywhere else."

These were the words of prudence, and when a few minutes later Edward Sutherland started in search of the missing boy, he was accompanied only by Mr. Bowles.

"We will just go to the tree where I left him and see if he is still there."

"Are you sure you can find it?"

"Yes; I cannot miss it."

"If we only had Peqawaski, or one of those pesky Oneidas with us it wouldn't take long to haul him up."

"No; but they are gone—no doubt they are with the Mohawks, and Peqawaski is ready to lead in the

attack upon some other settlement where he doesn't happen to have any friends."

"Queer dog. After we find the boy we'll hunt up the mare, which I think must be getting a little impatient."

"This is rather a dangerous proceeding," said Sutherland, "As there still may be Indians in the wood I want you to keep a particularly bright look-out, uncle Josiah, that they don't get ahead of us the last minute."

"That I will," was the response, and the two plunged together into the wood, where a half-hour's stealthy progress brought them to the identical tree, where Sutherland and the boy parted the day previous.

Nothing could be seen of the latter; but, as this was no proof of his absence, they called his name, at first, in a low voice, and then louder, until the sound echoed and re-echoed through the wood.

"He has gone," remarked Bowles, when they finally gave over the effort.

"Yes; I have no doubt he has descended, and made off."

"You don't think the Mohawks got him?"

"I dare not think about it! we will search. If we only had Pepwaski with us, he would speedily take up the trail, and decide the matter."

They were now at a stand still, as there was no indication of the proper course to pursue.

"We may as well go in one direction as another," said the old gentleman. "so 'spose we take a look at where I left the mare."

There could be no objection to this, and the suggestion was adopted. The mare was found in a dense mass of under-growth, where the keen eyes of the Indian's had failed to detect her. She looked as if she fit a little vicious at the neglect which she had suffered, but a little petting and coaxing from her

master soon restored her to her natural amiable disposition.

"Now, if we only had that little codger," remarked Mr. Bowles, "I think Mrs. Bowles would feel a little better."

"And so would we all."

They spent the entire forenoon in searching the wood, but not the first sign of the boy was discovered.

Much dejected and cast down, they finally wended their way homeward again. As they came into the clearing they saw the settlers busy moving their goods and effects back into their own houses; and almost the first one they recognized was Master Samuel Bowles helping his grandmother.

Three hours before he had merged from the woods, none the worse for his enforced absence from home. He had remained in the tree during the night; and his grandmother, upon a careful examination of his clothes, and especially his trowsers, found them in such a good condition, that she deferred her intended trouncing until some more accounts should accumulate against the boy.

A few days later the people returned to their dwellings, excepting the family whose house had been burned. They remained with Colonel Wells until another was built.

Not a member of the little settlement had been killed, or so much as injured.

The Iroquois fled in such a panic, that most of their dead were left upon the ground. Preparations were made to bury them, but on the first night succeeding the attack, a number of their friends, silently and stealthily returned, and as silently and stealthily bore them away.

Edward Sutherland remained his entire month. The greater part of it was spent wandering through the woods, fishing and talking lover's talk with Mary Wells. "Ned," as he was familiarly called, was uni-

versally termed "a fine young man," and when such an appellation becomes universal, there is reason to believe it is true.

He went safely and creditably through the Revolutionary War, and when peace came, returned to Willsburg, married his first and only love, and was happy as he desired to be.

THE END.

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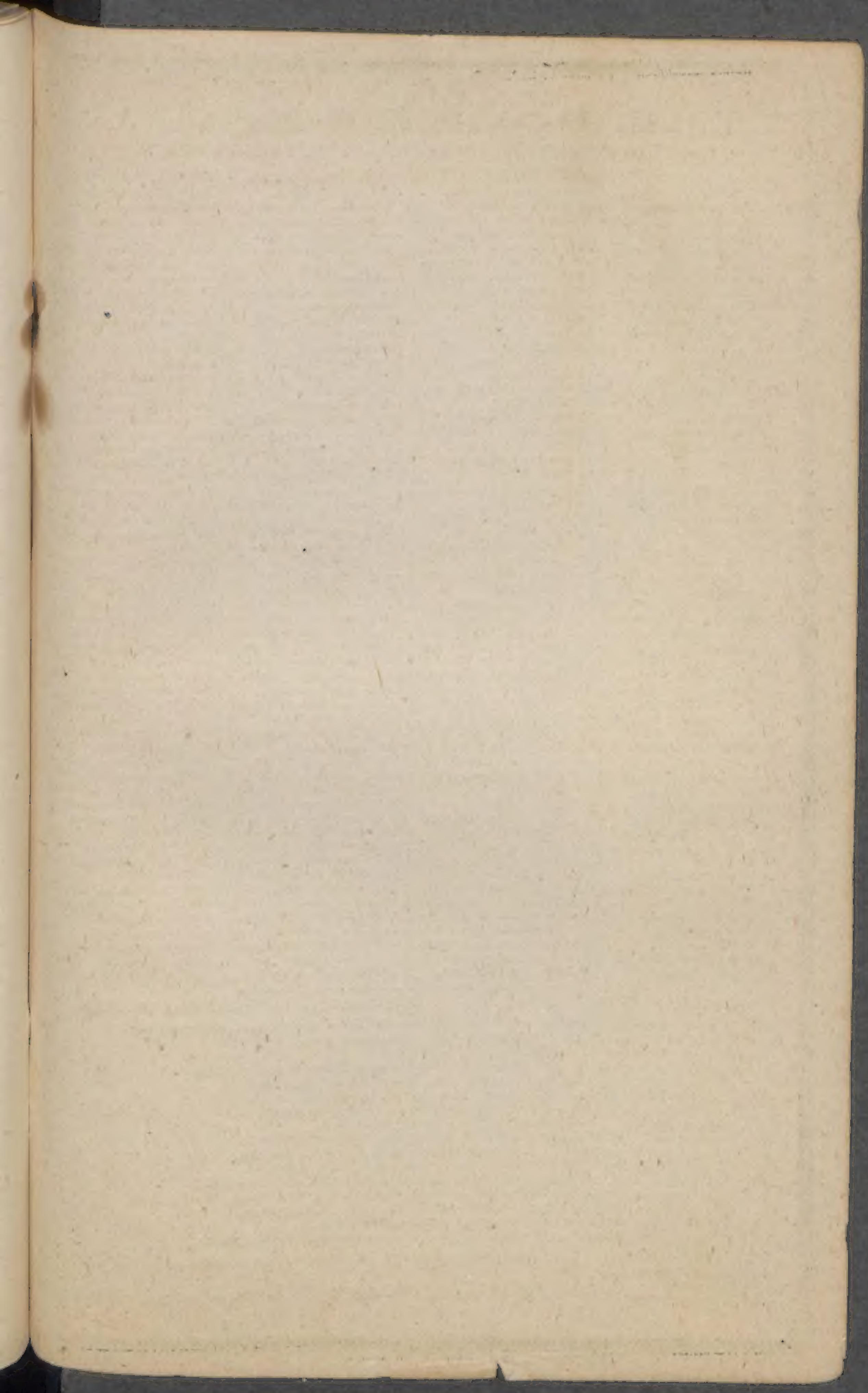
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